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OR,

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| 386. THE BLACK WIZARD. | 406. WHITE GLADIATOR. |
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THE SEA-KING.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG SAILOR.

A YOUNG lady was walking in a sunny, secluded part of her father's garden, in the early spring, watching the first snow-drops and crocuses that peeped out from the moist brown earth, and admiring the pale blossoms of a peach tree, carefully trained against the south side of a black wall. At a little distance from her an old man was at work, setting out flowers, and occasionally interchanging remarks with his young mistress; for old John Paul was a privileged person in the Earl of Selkirk's household, and Lady Flora, the earl's only daughter, had been scolded and petted since she was a baby by the obstinate old gardener.

"Are you not afraid of the night frosts, Paul, that may injure those carnations you are setting out so early?" asked the young lady.

"Hoot, na, my leddy," said old John, crustily. "D'ye think I ha'e been gairdner, man and boy, forty-five year, and dinna ken the deeference 'twixt a late spring and an airly ane? It's unco seldom auld Jock mak's a mistake, gi'n he ha'e but common luck. Yer feyther wull tell ye sae, my leddy. Forty-five year has auld Jock Paul kept the gairden for his lairdship, and never a frast kilt sae muckle as a head o' kale a' the time. I wadna like to swear as muckle for young Jock, my leddy. The lad's unco careless in his ways, and thinks mair o' the storrm on the sea and the feckless sailor bodies, wi' their strange aiths, and their carousals and fights, than o' helpin' his auld feyther, and tendin' his lairdship's gairden. 'Twas anely last sprung, my leddy, that I troosted him to set oot some young cherries, and the laddie kilt ilka ane o' them, through berrin' o' them too deep."

The young lady had listened with a half-smile to the old gardener's exordium, but something in the end of his speech seemed to excite her curiosity, for she asked hastily :

"And where is John now, Mr. Paul? I thought he had gone to sea."

"Hoot! sae he deed," said John, sarcastically; "and he kem back too, my leddy, sae fu' of his reefed topsails, and his gaskets and his best bowers, that a decent body that stays on the land the Lord made was na gude enech to talk to him, and gi'n ye speer him a ceevil question aboon what he's seen in furrin' pairts, he'll cam' oot on ye with the domdest lees—savin' yer presence, my leddy—ye e'er heard tell on, aboon a fush that flees i' the air like a birdie, and another fush that's got a swaird on his snoot, for a' the warld like a sairgent's pike, and a' sic fulishness, till I get sae crabbit wi' his lees that I tell him to gae to the ale-hoose, and tell't to the loons that kens nae better—a fush that flees!—wi' a spike in his snoot!—hoot, awa!"

The young lady seemed to be greatly diverted with honest John's indignation, for she could hardly speak for laughing, as she said :

"But, suppose he should tell you the truth, John? I've heard of flying-fish and sword-fish myself."

"Ay, father," said a clear, manly voice, at this juncture; "I told you to ask lady Flora if it was not true. Good-morning, lady Flora!"

And a young man of about twenty-five, dressed in the costume of a seafaring man of the better sort, perhaps captain of a merchant vessel, emerged from behind a hedge of box and advanced to meet them.

Lady Flora cast a quick, comprehensive, and essentially feminine, glance at the young sailor, which took in every detail of his appearance in a flash, and then, from some cause or another, she colored slightly, as she said, with an air of affected indifference :

"Why, John—Mr. Paul, I mean—how you are changed! I should hardly have known you for the same boy that used to make toy-boats for me, when we were children together."

Young Paul looked keenly at her for a moment. His eyes

were a dark gray, inclining to hazel, and remarkably piercing. He smiled faintly as he observed:

"I am not the only one that is changed, lady Flora. A little girl, as frank and ingenuous as a two-year-old infant, has changed into a guarded fine lady, who remembers her station, and makes her inferiors feel it."

Again lady Flora colored, this time more deeply. She laughed, and turned the conversation, with the adroitness of the fine lady he had compared her to.

"Well, John, but those flying-fish that you have been telling your father about? For shame, to deceive so fond a parent! Why, he is angry enough about it to disinherit you on the spot."

Young Paul tried to smile again, but the effort was a failure. He looked chilled and hurt at the distant, jesting tone assumed by his old playmate, whom he saw now after an absence of six years for the first time. Old Paul came to the relief with his grumbling remarks in due season.

"Hoot, aye, my leddy. Gi'n the lad wull stond to it, before yer leddyship, that he's seen fushes a fleein'—wha kens—I may believe it. Hoot, Jock, what gars ye stond there like an unceevil loon as ye are, wi'oot sae muckle as scrapin' yer heend leg and makin' a decent bow to her leddyship, as I tocht ye, when ye were a wee bairn? Ye maun excuse my Jock, my leddy, for his unpoletness, but thae sailors they forget a' the manners they ever learnt, ganging roaming amang a paircel o' salvages and Mounseers, that never kenned the comfort o' a pair o' breeks, ony mair than a Hielandman, no to speak o' hearin' the ten commandments in the kirk, ilka Sawbath. Kirks, indeed! It's ill finding kirks on wauves o' the sea, and that's where the loon's been sailin' for sax years, the noo, for a' the world like a chip in the mill-race. Hech, sirs! Wha but a feckless sailor wad think o' desairtin' the solid airth, that haes foondations, and whaur ye ken whaur ye air, to gae sailin' on a treecherous eelement leek the au-chean, whaur the de'il himsel' heeds oonder the wauves, and carries the puir sheepwracked bodies to his ain hame, that the wracked sailors ca's Dauvy Jones' Locker?"

Young Paul laughed good-naturedly at his father's tirade.

"Nay, nay, father," he said; "you wander from the sub-

ject. It was about those wonderful fish that I was telling you. I have no doubt that Lady Flora could show you pictures, in some of the books in his lordship's library, of flying-fish, sword-fish, whales and sharks."

"Whales, indeed!" said John, hastily. "Hoot, laddie, I'll gi'e ye the whales, gi'n ye leek. 'Twas a whale swallowed Jonah, in the Gude Buke. An' the shirks tae—I'll gi'e ye the shirks—but *no the fleein'-fush*."

Lady Flora laughed.

"Will you believe it if I show you the picture in a printed book, John?" she asked, archly.

"Hoot, yes, my leddy," said old John, promptly. "Gi'n 'tis in a *buke*, I'll believe it, for a man wadna *daur* to pit a lee in a *buke*. But 'tis unco hard to believe, my leddy."

"Put down your spade, and go to the house, then," said Lady Flora; "and ask Mr. Murdock, the steward, to show you Buffon's Natural History, in the library. Tell him what you want to know, and say I sent you."

"'Deed then I will, my leddy," said old Paul, promptly; "and gi'n I find you grauceless scaump has deceived me—hoot! but I'll mak' him feel the length of ma stock."

And old Paul stumped off to the house, leaving Lady Flora and young Paul together by the peach-wall.

There was an awkward silence of several minutes, which was broken by the gardener's son, in a low, bitter tone of voice:

"Six years ago, madam, you were fifteen, and I was nineteen. You were not ashamed, in those days, to break *this* with me. Now, I presume you have no further use for your half, to judge from your present demeanor. If so, I am willing to receive it. I might have known that an earl's daughter was not likely long to entertain an affection, however clandestine, for the son of her father's gardener. You have taught me to-day my egregious mistake, in believing it to be possible."

He held out his hand as he spoke, and in it lay the broken half of a silver coin.

Lady Flora flushed scarlet, and then turned deadly pale, as she looked at young Paul. The gardener's son had the port of a prince, as he pierced her with his lightning glance. Self-

educated though he was, slight in figure, and below the medium height, there was yet that unmistakable stamp of genius on his dark, peculiar face, under strong emotion, that gave him at the moment, an air of superiority over the high-bred lady before him.

Lady Flora trembled, and burst into tears, sobbing:

"Oh, John, John, I do love you, indeed, more than ever. But I feel so frightened. You look so different from six years ago."

CHAPTER II.

THE LOVERS.

IN the west wing of the huge castellated mansion that owned the Earl of Selkirk for its proprietor, on the southern side, overlooking the water, a small octagonal library, with stained glass windows, in the old Gothic style in which the rest of the mansion was built, had been constructed, within a few years of the time of which we write, 1774. Below it, the ground sloped rapidly away to the beach that bordered Solway Firth, in which the little island of St. Mary's lay, at the mouth of the river Dee. Looking across the rolling waters of the firth, one could see the white houses and red tiled roofs at Whitehaven, twenty-five miles off, on a clear day; and the morning on which our story opens was unusually clear.

A stately and well-preserved old gentleman was just issuing from the low-arched doorway of this library, as old John Paul came up from the garden. Mild as the morning was, the old gentleman was wrapped in a long furred roquelaure, and his delicate white hands were thrust into a sable muff.

Old John touched his hat respectfully, as the other addressed him.

"Good-morning, John. I am going to take a little turn and look at your pets, to-day. How does the garden come on?"

"Hech, my laird, unco puirly," said the old gardener, discontentedly. "We dinna hae the same weather, I mind, that

we used to hae when his lairdship and auld Jock were wee bit laddies thegither. We hae warse luck ilka year, till a body can no' tell what comes naxt. And the lads are no' the same that they used to be, when ilka son was prood to gang douce and canny in his feyther's footsteps, and leek feyther, leek son was the rule. Hech, my laird, but 'the time's sairly oot o' joint,' as Wully Shakspeare says."

"Why, John," quoth the earl, smiling, "what has caused all this moral reflection on your part to-day? Has your son refused to follow in your footsteps?"

"Hech, that's joost it, my laird. — My Jock he winna give up the sea, for a' the adveece I can gi'e him. And he tells sic stories—odds my laird! wad ye believe, he tells o' a feesh that carries a swaird in his snoot, like yer lairdship's when ye gang to coort. 'Tis a sair thing to think that auld Jock should be the feyther of a leear."

The earl laughed.

"He told you the truth, John. Go in here and look on the table. A book lies there, open at the very plate of the fish he means, the sword-fish. You'll see it when you go in. Where is your son now? I should like to see the lad. 'Tis six years, now, since he left, is it not? I used to think John a very promising boy. In fact, I have been thinking of using my interest to secure him a place in the royal navy, if he is the good lad I take him for. Where is he, John?"

"'Deed, then, he's doon in the garden, my laird, claverin' wid my leddy Flora. My leddy's unco curious, ye ken, my laird, to hear a' the news fra furrin pairts; and my Jock, though I say it that shouldn't, is a braw laddie to talk. Ye'll feend him in the gairden, by the peach-wall, my laird. And sae 'twas nae lee he tauld me aboon the swaird-fish? Hech, but I'm blithe to hear't."

And old John entered the library, intent on seeing the wonderful plate that was to convince him of his son's truthfulness.

The Earl of Selkirk strolled into the garden, soliloquizing as he went, after a common habit of his.

"Young John is a good lad and has good parts. 'Tis not every one of his humble birth that would possess sufficient force of character to go to sea in spite of his father's preju-

dices, and win his way up as they tell me he has. I am told that he is the master of a considerable vessel in the Virginia trade. I think I must ask the ministers for a master's place for him. They owe me a good turn for supporting the stamp duties, when so many were against them. Who knows? This youth might rise, as Sir Cloudesley Shovel did, to be an admiral, and 'twould do me great credit. Besides, I like the lad well."

As he spoke, he was wandering on, up one walk and down another, in the quaint, old-fashioned maze or labyrinth of box hedges that composed a large part of the formal garden.

All at once he stopped and listened, for the sound of voices, not far off, in conversation, announced to him the presence of others. He strolled slowly toward them, on a soft green walk that muffled his footsteps, murmuring to himself:

"Now, I suppose, giddy Flora is swallowing all the yarns the young sailor can spin, for Gospel truth. 'Twill do the child good to hear something of the world outside of this; but we must take care that the youth does not wax too presuming. Flora is apt to forget her station."

As he uttered the last words he turned the corner of a hedge, and stopped, spell-bound, at the sight that met his eyes.

His only daughter and heiress, the high-bred Lady Flora Selkirk, was seated on a rustic bench, not twer'y feet from him, with her back turned to him, while sitting beside her, *with his arm around her waist*, was the son of his gardener, young John Paul, in the dress of a sailor! For a minute the earl could not stir or speak, so great was his horror and surprise. But when he saw the two lovers, for such they undoubtedly were, actually embrace each other, a change came over him.

His usually pale and calm features settled into a stern frown, while the blood mounted to his forehead, and he trembled all over with passion. Had he carried a cane, as was his usual custom, he would doubtless have belabored young Paul incontinently; but as it was, he had left it at the house. For a moment he stood with clenched hands, trembling all over; then, with a low but furious oath, he sprung forward, caught the young sailor by the collar, and dragged

him away from the bench, clutching hard at his throat, and striving to throttle him.

But young Paul, though completely taken by surprise, for he had not seen nor heard the earl's approach, seemed to be quite undismayed. The touch of an assailant on the contrary, seemed to waken up the tiger blood in his veins, for he writhed round in the other's grasp, gave a sudden sway and lock that told of the skillful wrestler, and in a moment the proud Earl of Selkirk was flung with violence on his back, while young Paul set his foot on his breast, hissing between his clenched teeth:

"How now, assassin?"

Then, in a moment, Lady Flora shrieked out:

"Good God, John! 'Tis my father!"

The young man withdrew his foot, and gazed, in doubt, anger, and astonishment, on the figure of the recumbent nobleman, who was slowly trying to rise, as white as a sheet, and trembling all over from the violent shock he had received.

Young Paul said not a word, when Lady Flora ran to assist her father. He folded his arms and gazed gloomily at the ground. The old earl rose to his feet, rejecting the proffered assistance of his daughter, and faced the young man with a dignity few men could have shown under such circumstances.

"You have grown strong, young sir," he said, sarcastically, "since you have dipped your hands in the tar-bucket. You have taught me a lesson I shall not forget, never to soil my hands by laying them on a plebeian like you. The presumption that has led you to inveigle a foolish child, ignorant of the world, into stooping from her station to notice you, has reached its height at last, when my gardener's son has dared to raise his eyes to my daughter. I know how to deal with you, now."

As he spoke, he turned to his daughter for the first time, and drew her arm within his, almost fiercely.

"Flora," he said, "on penalty of of my dying curse, never speak one word to that man again. Come with me. For you, sir, if you remain where you are five minutes more, the Earl of Selkirk's servants shall quench the flame of your am-

bition in Solway Firth; and the whipping-post shall teach you what it is for a fellow like you to try his arts on an earl's daughter."

He turned and stalked proudly away, Lady Flora, pale as death, and weeping, clinging to his arm.

As for young Paul, he never moved from his position of gloomy thought all the while. When the angry earl uttered his last threat, the young sailor gave a short, scornful laugh, but took no further notice till the old man was gone.

Then he flung himself moodily down on the rustic seat, and bitterly spoke aloud:

"I might have known it. Fool that I was to leave the free sea, where a man is a man, to come back to a land of slaves. Let him come on. He shall not find me gone."

CHAPTER III.

THE PRODIGAL EXPELLED.

YOUNG Paul had not long to wait. Before five minutes were over, he heard the rapid tramp of heavy feet, and voices raised in anger and denunciation. Then the old earl, erect and active as a boy, came round the corner of a hedge in front, at some twenty yards off, followed by five or six rustics, and advanced straight toward him.

Lord Selkirk halted and pointed at young Paul, crying:

"Seize him quick, duck him in the firth, and then flog him with cart-whips, till he cries for mercy!"

"Hoot, aye!" "Dook the black-hearted loon!" "Sae kind a laird, to be sae treated!" were the various cries that saluted the ears of the young sailor, as the mob rushed at him, each eager to curry favor with his master by seizing the audacious youth. But they came to a sudden and unanimous halt, half-way, as Paul rose to his feet.

The cause of their halt was very simple

The muzzles of *four* pistol barrels covered the whole crowd.

Young Paul had drawn from the pockets of his loose pea-

jacket a pair of short, deadly-looking, double-barreled pistols, and the ominous *click—click—click—click*—that followed, told that they were both ready to deal death among the rustics.

“Halt!” cried the stern voice of the young sailor. “Keep your distance, boys! You all know John Paul. The first man that passes his lordship, I shoot. Back behind him!”

As he settled his aim at the foremost man, that individual backed away with commendable prudence, and hid himself from view behind the next. But as number two was by no means deficient in the “better part of valor,” he naturally declined to serve as a shield for another, and backed away himself. The example set was quickly taken, and in a few moments the whole posse was hiding behind the figure of the Earl of Selkirk, who, on his part, stood his ground with perfect calmness.

“So,” he said, scornfully; “the strong men are afraid of the pistol, and the old man is left alone to face the pirate. Follow me, then.”

As he spoke he drew the light walking sword which he had assumed since going to the house, and marched straight on Paul, fearless of death.

“Keep back, my lord,” cried the youth, warningly; “if a man follows you, I shall fire.”

“Then fire and be hanged!” quoth the old peer, angrily, and kept on his way undauntedly.

Young Paul ran to one side, and fired two shots rapidly into the crowd of rustics, knocking off one man’s hat, and sending the whole crowd in full flight in a moment. Then he laughed scornfully, replaced both pistols in his pockets and waited for the earl.

As the old man approached, and dealt a furious thrust, the younger one leaped to one side, grasped the slender rapier with both hands, and tore it from the old man’s hand like a toy. Snapping it over his knee he threw the pieces over the hedge, and faced the earl with a dignity of his own that compelled respect.

“My lord,” he said, “had you ordered me from your domains, I should have obeyed without a murmur, recognizing your right so to do. You preferred to threaten me and to attempt my life, when I had spared yours. You have taught

me a lesson to-day, at least as valuable as the one you say I have taught you—that this country, where men of the same clay as I am, lord it over their fellow-men, as if they were dogs, is no place for me. My lord, farewell. I will not ask you to spare my old father on my account, for you are a gentleman after all, or I should not have spared *you*. I only ask you to remember that he and I are two different beings.”

“You need not remind me of that,” said the earl, proudly. “John Paul is an honest man. His son is a designing ruffian, whom ill luck and my servants’ cowardice have given a temporary advantage over me. Have you done, sir?”

The old nobleman was as stiff and unbending in his discomfiture as ever. The tremor of excitement had departed and he was outwardly calm and impassive. The young sailor raised his hat and bowed low.

“I have nearly done, my lord,” he said. “You may think that there are no gentlemen but those born in the purple. Before many years are over, my lord, you will see a nation of gentlemen arise across the ocean, that never knew a lord. To that nation I go; and you, my lord, who supported the stamp duties, will live to see the fairest jewel of the British crown wrenched from it by the hands of those whom you call plebeians. I shall be among them, my lord. I go now, and St. Mary’s will never see me again, till my name rings through all England as a name of fear.”

The earl laughed scornfully.

“You should go on the stage, sir. Your language and sentiments smack of the stroller. When you come back, you may find that there is enough rope in England to hang you, for I doubt not you will end on the gallows. Are you going, sir?”

“I am, my lord,” said the other, slowly. “But—*you may expect me again*. Good-morning.”

He raised his hat once more, and turned gloomily away down another walk.

The earl looked back, and beheld the cowardly servants at the end of the avenue, peeping down toward him. As he looked, the bent and decrepit form of old John Paul came hobbling round the hedge, and hurried toward him. The old man was trembling and agitated, and ran up to his master, crying:

"Oh, my laird, my laird, wha wad hae thocht that son o' mine should be foon in sic a disgrace! Whaur's the dom'd villain, that I may curse the day I begat him? Hech, sirs, but the sea and the wonnerful fleeing fushes hae brocht him to a sair pass, that he wad daur to gang sparkin' the laird's ain dochter! Whiles I mind, the noo, that I aye mistroosted thae seafauring ways, and noo 't has coom, and the laddie puir 'essie left behind her has disgraced his auld feyther."

And old John Paul burst out crying.

The earl turned, kindly enough, to his old servant.

"'Tis not your fault, John," he said, gently, and using the Scripture illustration he knew the old man would appreciate.

"Eli and David were good men, but they had bad sons. It can not be helped. He is gone, and we must try to forget the viper in the house, that has stung the hand that fed him."

"Hoot, aye, and I wull, my laird," said John, stoutly, "and gi'n the villain hasna gone, I'll e'en gang doon mysel' and gi'e him the length of my staff. Follow me, lads. We'll see if the loon will frechten his auld feyther wi' his peestols and the like."

And away stumped old John toward the waterside, followed by the now valiant rustics, encouraged by the old man's fearlessness.

They hurried down the path to the edge of the bank, and beheld the object of their search, seated in the stern-sheets of a small boat, the sheet of a lugsail in his hand, while the breeze was bearing him rapidly away from the shore.

A torrent of abuse and threats, cast from the shore, was taken in silent contempt by young Paul; but when a volley of stones followed, one of which fell into the boat, he turned round, leveled a pistol like lightning, and instantly fired.

The man who had thrown the stone uttered a yell of pain, and dropped, with a broken leg.

Young Paul waved the pistol ironically, as the rest scattered and ran; and the boat cut the water rapidly on her way to Whitehaven.

Old John Paul, who had come down so furious, when he saw the fall of his fellow-servant, seemed to be dumbfounded with grief and amazement together. He stood stockstill, muttering:

"God guide us! I ha'e begotten a de'il! I ha'e begotten a de'il!"

From the day in which he sailed away in the little boat toward Whitehaven, the people of St. Mary's Isle never saw John Paul the younger again. They heard that the vessel he commanded, a brig in the Virginia trade, sailed that afternoon for America, but political events wore too exciting an aspect to allow private interest to engross the attention, and the audacious sailor and his bold attempt were alike forgotten in the impending rebellion in the American Colonies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO CAPTAINS.

ON a bright morning in April, in the year 1778, the harbor of Brest was full of vessels, the workmen busily employed in calking, rigging, hoisting in masts, crossing yards, and fitting all the various paraphernalia that go to make up that wonderful machine, a ship-of-war.

Brest, like most other French harbors, is largely an artificial one, formed by erecting moles or breakwaters, inclosing a large pool, shut in by cliffs, and protected by the most formidable works.

On the parapet of one of these fortifications, engaged in conversation, were two gentlemen in the uniform of naval officers, the one English, the other French. The English officer was a large, fresh-colored man, with a hearty, bluff-looking face, a manner decidedly overbearing and haughty, but withal would have been called a polished gentleman, if met in society, for he had seen a great deal of the world. The Frenchman was a small man, perhaps five foot four in height, with a dark, pale face, eyes of remarkable keenness, and a very quiet, reserved manner, different from that of his excitable countrymen in general. He talked English with an accent of remarkable purity, a very material item in the esti-

mation of his companion, whose French, like that of most Englishmen, was execrable.

"Well, captain," said the Englishman, "as I was saying, this rebellion can not possibly last very long now, sir. Why, do you know that General Sir John Burgoyne wil' soon move upon their works, with ten thousand of the best troops in the world? What chance will your Yankee friends have then, sir? They'll run like whipped hounds. It's universally acknowledged that England is the greatest nation now extant. As for the sea, the rebels haven't got a single ship afloat, that wouldn't run from an English man-of-war's launch with a carronade in her bow."

"Do you think so, Captain Burton?" was the only reply of the other, with a covert smile.

"Why, *certainly*, sir," returned Burton, with an accent of lofty surprise at the doubt. "I don't wish to be rude, Captain Bonjean, but even your own navy can't hold a candle to ours; much less a spawn of ill-begotten rebels like these Yankees, recognized by no country under heaven."

Captain Bonjean smiled again, as he observed:

"You are mistaken. They have an ambassador at Versailles, monsieur."

"Ay, ay, I forgot," said the Englishman, angrily. "His *French* majesty, I believe, *has* been fooled by them, to the extent of receiving that printer-fellow, they call Franklin, at Versailles. Our minister may have to see about that, before long. So much the better. I'm getting tired of peace, as far as I'm concerned, and I should like a war with your people, of all things, captain. Your officers are gentlemanly antagonists, with whom it is a pleasure to fight."

"Thanks, monsieur," said Bonjean, bowing gravely. "I fancy, however, that you will have enough to do with these Americans ere long. Are you ordered to sea yet, captain?"

"Ay, ay," said Burton, discontentedly; "I received the order to-day. This is my last day in Brest, for I must be in Ireland within a week. They've appointed me to the *Drake*, a twenty-gun sloop, lying at Carrickfergus, and I must start in the packet for Cork to-night. I shall have to leave my wife and every thing else behind me, in the hurry. Blast all orders, say I."

"Your wife!" echoed the French officer, in a tone of surprise; "and is it possible that you are married, monsieur? You, a sailor!"

"You may well wonder," said the Englishman, with a coarse laugh. "I often wonder myself how I could have been fool enough to take old Selkirk's daughter, and tie myself down to married life, when I was such a jolly bachelor. But then, you know, she was worth a round ten thousand a year, and the earl and my father were second cousins; and so they arranged it between them, and I didn't care. So the upshot of it was that I became a Benedict, saddled with Lady Flora Burton and a maid, and a lapdog, and Selkirk for a father-in-law."

And the Hon. Septimus Burton, Commander, R. N., gave a sigh, compounded of affected *ennui* and real boastfulness.

The French officer compressed his lips, and said not a word. He stood gazing out over the quiet, quaint-looking town, with its steep tiled roofs, that lay just below the ramparts on which they stood, and his eyes fixed themselves on a small ship that lay in the outer harbor, her foretopsail loose and fluttering, the "blue-peter" streaming from the mast-head.

There was a short silence between the two officers. Burton's glance, roaming over the harbor, at length lighted on the ship in question, and he remarked:

"A sweet, pretty little ship, Captain Bonjean. She rides like a duck. I wonder who she is?"

"An American, I believe," returned Bonjean, indifferently; "at least, they say so."

The English captain started and looked aghast.

"An American!" he echoed. "Good heavens, what insolent temerity! Does the impudent rascal positively expect to get across the Atlantic safely in that cockle-shell? By Gad, sir, I wish he would stay here a little longer. I'd bring the Drake into Brest single-handed, and cut the fellow out under the guns of the forts."

Captain Bonjean looked at the other with a curious glance, as he said: "I fancy that you will be gratified, captain, though not here, with a sight of yonder vessel. Will you give me your word of honor as a gentleman and an officer never to reveal what I am about to say?"

"Certainly," said the Englishman, promptly. "Yonder vessel is a disguised cruiser, is she not? Speak out. I will keep the secret, whatever it be. Your Government shall not be compromised by mine, on my honor."

"Have you ever heard of one Captain Jones?" demanded Bonjean.

"I should think I had," replied the British captain. "I was first officer of the *Solebay*, twenty-eight, when we chased the rascal on the Yankee coast. By Jove, sir, I'll admit the man's a good sailor and a bold one. With a little cockle-shell of a sloop, carrying nothing but four-pounders, I'll be hanged if he didn't have the impudence to return our fire, and make a running fight out of it for two mortal hours, besides getting off safe after all, by a resort to a cunning Yankee trick."

And the English officer laughed long and loud at the recollection. The French captain apparently was also tickled at the story, for he, too, uttered a short laugh, and his eyes sparkled with a fierce light. In a moment, however, he had resumed his gravity, and pointed to the vessel below them, saying:

"Yonder vessel, sir, is the Continental corvette, *Ranger*, and her commander is Captain Paul Jones of the American navy."

Captain Burton ejaculated an astonished oath—swearing was a general fashion in those days—and exclaimed:

"By heavens, that Jones is a bold fellow! Why, where are his guns?"

"I am inclined to think the English navy will hear them ere long," said Bonjean, quietly. "But you are aware, Captain Burton, that the complaints of your minister at Versailles, about aid and comfort extended to the rebels, have produced such an effect, that the American cruisers are compelled to disguise themselves in French ports. I should not tell you this, captain, except under the guarantee of your honor, for I know the American commander well, and would not wish that any harm should happen to him."

"By Jove, sir," said the Englishman, frankly, "I am beginning to like this fellow, Jones. Rest assured he shall not suffer through my indiscretion. At the same time I can tell him this, that if he or I ever meet on the seas, I shall take

him and hang him to the yard-arm as a pirate. He's a brave fellow, as I said, but he's only a pirate, for all that."

Captain Bonjean smiled.

"I will inform him of your determination," he said, quietly. "Would you like to see his vessel closely? If you like, I will take you there and introduce you to him."

The English captain looked at the French captain dubiously.

"Are you in earnest?" he asked. "It will give me a great advantage over him, remember."

"Paul Jones is accustomed to meeting heavy odds," said Bonjean. "I take the responsibility in his name. Will you come?"

"With pleasure," said Burton, promptly. "But I tell you, your man will be sorry for it."

The French captain shrugged his shoulders with a smile, turned, and descended from the ramparts, followed by the English officer. It was but a short walk through the little town to the quay, where they found a large boat lying at the steps, manned with sailors whose neat blue uniform bore the word RANGER in white letters on the breast.

Captain Bonjean addressed a few rapid French words to a young midshipman in the stern, and remarked to Burton:

"Captain Jones is not on board yet, but I am told that the Ranger is about to trip her anchor, and that he will reach there at the same time that we do. This young gentleman will see us safe aboard. So, if you have no objection, we will embark."

CHAPTER V.

THE RANGER.

CAPTAIN BURTON bowed a courteous assent, and Bonjean made a signal to the young midshipman. In a moment the lately slouching and silent crew became animated, and sprung to their seats.

"Oars!" cried the shrill, boyish voice of the midshipman,

and the broad blades of fourteen oars went up in the air, in a naval salute to the two captains. The little officer touched his cap, the two captains stepped on board, and down came the oars with a splash into the water.

Away went the boat in regular man-of-war style, closing rapidly in on the strange vessel that had so excited Burton's admiration and curiosity. As they came nearer, the admiration increased, for the Ranger was indeed a lovely creation of marine architecture.

Rating at between four and five hundred tons burden, the little ship was very low in the water, with bows of unusual length and fineness in those days of "kettle-bottom" ships. Her breadth of beam was very great, so much so, that a stern view gave her the appearance of a clumsy vessel; but the fineness of her run, and the clipper-like smoothness of slope, that commenced far abaft the mainmast, and terminated in a knife like cut-water, announced, to the observer alongside, that the Ranger was probably a very fast vessel, as well as a stiff one. Viewed at the distance of a cable length from her starboard quarter, it could be seen that she was a little out of trim, according to the notions of those days, when a level keel was looked on as essential. The Ranger was decidedly "by the stern," and the sailor's eye of Burton noticed it at once.

"Your Yankee friend is going to sea in a queer trim, Bonjean," he said. "He's not such a sailor as I thought, after all."

Bonjean smiled.

"We shall see," he answered. "The Yankees build different ships from the English, you know."

"Why, you don't pretend the fellow *means* it?" said Burton.

"I'm inclined to think he does," replied the French captain. "You know this Ranger was built at Baltimore, and she's always trimmed that way. How do you like her?"

"She's a beauty," said the English officer, with a sailor's frank admiration.

And truly the Ranger deserved the comment, as she lay there at her anchor, with loosened topsails fluttering in the brails. Her masts were heavy enough for a first-class frigate,

while the squareness of her yards announced the power of spreading an enormous stretch of canvas. Every rope and stick was in its place, topgallant-yards crossed, and every thing on the vessel as neat as in a frigate, while not a gun was to be seen, and not a man was visible above the rail.

When the English captain at last withdrew his gaze, Bonjean made a signal to the midshipman. The boat, which had paused to allow the other to gaze his fill, moved on, and approached the ship. To the Englishman's surprise, the side ladder was manned as they approached, and the shrill whistle of a boatswain was heard, summoning the hands to receive the expected officers.

"Your friends seem to understand discipline," he observed. "Have they any English deserters to teach them?"

"You shall see," answered Bonjean, smiling; and he ascended the side, followed by the English captain.

On their arrival at the deck, the *Ranger* presented all the appearance of a man-of-war, her crew standing at quarters, the neat uniforms of a squad of marines in regular lines, while officers on deck saluted simultaneously.

The only respect in which she differed from a cruiser was, that not a gun was to be seen on her deck, and that marines, sailors and officers were all alike unarmed.

Captain Bonjean advanced to the center of the quarter-deck, and addressed his surprised companion, gravely:

"Captain Burton," he said, "I promised to introduce you to Captain Paul Jones. *He stands before you.*"

And the renowned American rover, for it was none other, raised his hat, and saluted the other with much politeness.

Burton looked utterly thunderstruck.

"*You! Are you Paul Jones?*" was all he could say.

"I am John Paul Jones, by the commission of Congress captain in the Continental navy," said the rover, calmly. "I might add, 'you are my prisoner, sir.' Instead of that, I will only say, 'you are my guest as far as Cork.'"

"Your guest! your prisoner!" exclaimed Burton, turning scarlet with indignation. "Do you mean to say you have entrapped me on board this vessel as a prisoner? Captain Jones, this is an outrage that shall be punished, sir, if it costs all the power of England!"

"You are mistaken," returned the other, calmly. "Paul Jones may rove the seas, in your eyes a rebel and pirate; but, for all that, he is an officer and a gentleman, as you shall see. You are now in France, on leave of absence, and your orders compel you to leave for Cork to-night. I will assist your passage. You shall go with us this morning. I give you fair warning, that, once you are landed, *I shall sail for Carrickfergus*. If you are there in time you will have the pleasure of fighting your own vessel. If not, I shall cut it out before you come. What say you now? Will you take passage in the Ranger, or wait for the packet? In the latter case, I warn you, *you will be too late to save the Drake*."

The honorable captain stood moodily biting his nails at the end of this speech. At last he said:

"I am in your power. Do with me as you will. But remember that if you show treachery, all Christendom shall ring with it. Your conduct to me will decide whether you are a pirate or a sailor."

"Be it so," said the American, quietly.

Then he turned to an officer near him.

"Mr. Lunt, trip the anchor, and make sail at once, if the pilot's aboard."

"Very good, sir," replied the officer addressed, touching his cap.

The boatswain's whistle sounded, followed by the hoarse shout:

"ALL HANDS, MAKE SAIL!"

Then the silent and orderly ship became, in a moment, a scene of the most animated bustle and confusion.

The capstan was manned by fifty stout sailors, who commenced their steady walk around, in perfect silence, so different from the melodious "Yo-heave-oh!" of the merchant service. Twice as many active and nimble top-men swarmed into the rigging, and scrambled aloft in a trice, spreading out over the black yards like a swarm of bees, while hoarse orders flew back and forth from top to top, and every thing, to an uninstructed eye, seemed a Babel of confusion.

Then there came a sudden shock, and the noble vessel trembled all over, as the anchor parted from its oozy bed, and the capstan spun rapidly round to the rush of the men.

The Ranger fell off to the fresh breeze, as the clear voice of the lieutenant hailed from the deck :

"Let fall! Sheet home!"

In a moment a cloud of canvas fell from the yards, and the men on deck manned braces and sheets, with a silent order beautiful to see.

There were no more counter-orders now. The captains of the tops had done their duty, and the officer of the deck was supreme.

As the snowy cloud of canvas filled, the Ranger heeled gracefully over, till her gleaming copper showed itself to the morning sun, and away she glided, out of the harbor of Brest, to a lively breeze, cutting the sparkling waves with the speed of a yacht.

An hour after they were out at sea, heading west-nor'-west, the Ranger covered with canvas, from sky-sails to courses; the studding-sail booms were being run out, and the vessel was leaving the coast of France at fifteen knots an hour.

In another hour's hard work, a marvelous change was effected in the appearance of the vessel. Gun after gun was hoisted out of the hold, and mounted in its appropriate place, before the eyes of the observant Burton. Muskets and cutlasses were ranged in armistacks, the marines assumed their weapons and paraded for duty, and the sailors belted on their cutlasses.

When the coast of France began to sink in the distance, the drum beat to quarters, and Paul Jones, standing by the side of the reluctantly-admiring Burton, looked with the eye of a proud chief at the silent and obedient crew of that terrible engine of destruction, a completely equipped man-of-war.

CHAPTER VI.

LADY FLORA.

A LADY, still young and handsome, but wearing a settled expression of melancholy on her pale face, was reclining on a sofa by the open window of the principal hotel in Brest, gazing thoughtfully out to sea, where the brightly-glittering waves danced mockingly in the sunshine, and stately men-of-war and brown-sailed fishing-boats went sailing to and fro.

The lady seemed sad and preoccupied, paying no attention to the entreating whines and caresses of a beautiful little spaniel, that was trying to attract the notice of its mistress.

As she looked out, she murmured bitterly to herself :

"Only three years a wife, and already it seems as if I were an old woman. *He* seems to think so, at least. Day after day passes and I never see him, except for a careless sneer, if he is good-tempered, or a ruffianly oath if he has drank too deep the night before with his boon companions. And it was for *this* life, that I obeyed my father's wishes, tore out of my heart the only love I ever had, and wedded this man ! Oh, father ! father ! if ever I have a daughter, I would rather see her married to a poor fisherman, compelled to toil hard for his daily bread, than know that she was doomed to wear the poisoned fetters of a marriage without love, where the gold that covers the sharp steel only aggravates the pressure by its weight. Flora Selkirk has fallen so low that her very maid supplants her in her own house, and the husband that should love her only insults her. When will it all end ?"

She fell into a sad reverie, from which she was awakened by a tap at the door.

"Come in," said the lady, wearily.

A smart French maid opened the door, and entered the room, holding a letter in her hand. The girl was quite handsome in face and form, of the lively brunette style ; but the half-saucy, half-stealthy look in her black eyes was decidedly disagreeable.

Lady Flora Burton held out her hand for the note without a word, and made a cold sign to the girl to retire. The maid did so, but only for a few steps, when she waited in silence for her mistress to read the letter.

But this the lady did not seem inclined to do, under her servant's eyes. She turned quietly round.

"You can leave the room, Rosalie."

"Pardon, madame, but the man waits below for an answer, for monsieur le capitaine."

"You can leave the room, Rosalie. When I want you I will call for you."

"Very well, madame."

Rosalie's black eyes flashed fire as she turned round in obedience to the order, but she said nothing more. The door closed softly on her, and she disappeared from view. Lady Flora was not aware that the first act of her exemplary attendant, once outside the door, was to clench her fist and mutter:

"Ah, ciel! tu me donnera congé, veux tu! Nous verrons, sacr-r-ré Anglaise, nous verrons!"*

Rosalie's second action was less passionate and more practical. She dropped on her knees on the mat, and looked through the key-hole, with all the readiness and skill of a veteran detective.

Lady Flora looked at the letter with undisguised aversion. She knew the large sprawling handwriting too well. It was the sign manual of her tyrannical husband, the "Honorable" Captain Burton.

"What can he have to say?" she murmured. "An answer expected? He must be going away on some trip, I suppose. Perhaps—who knows?—'twould be like his insolent assurance—with some fresh mistress for a while, till he tires of her as he has of others. Well, well, let me see. I shall be rid of his hateful presence for a while, at least."

She opened the letter, which ran as follows:

"American Privateer Ranger; at sea,
April 2d, 1778.

"MADAM—you will please to pack up and take your depar-

* Ah, heavens! you'll turn me out, will you? We shall see, cursed Englishwoman, we shall see!

ture for England alone, as I have been kidnapped by that piratical scoundrel Paul Jones, and don't know when I shall see you again. The fellow has been gentleman enough to allow me to write this and send it in by a fishing-boat, and promises to set me ashore in Ireland, unless he's a liar. Start as soon as you get this, and don't delay on the road. You won't see me for some time, as I have to take command of the Drake, if I get safe to Ireland. So no more from

"Yours to command,

"LADY FLORA BURTON."

"SEPTIMUS BURTON."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Lady Flora, fervently. "At last I am free for a while. The captain has gone to sea. Rosalie!"

As she called, Mademoiselle Rosalie made her appearance in a very remarkable hurry, and her mistress continued:

"Quick, girl! Pack up every thing at once, send the landlord here, say I want the bill, and horses for Calais an hour from now."

"And the man that waits, madame?" demanded Rosalie, sulkily.

"Send him up. And be ready to start when the horses are at the door," said Lady Flora, sharply. "You and I will not get on well together very long, if you show any temper *now*, mademoiselle. *The captain has gone to sea.* Go, and send up the man."

Rosalie turned as pale as death as her mistress spoke. All the saucy hardihood of her usual manner disappeared in a moment and she dropped a submissive curtesy.

"*Oui, madame,*" she said, and instantly disappeared.

The lady smiled bitterly as the girl left the room.

"Heavens! to think it has come to this, that my insolent maid should depend on the support of my own husband, to sustain her in her insolence. Now I know it, if I never did before. Thank God, I am free for awhile. My father will help me, perhaps. It can not be possible that a man can be allowed to treat a woman thus forever."

There was a humble, hesitating knock at the door

"Come in."

A bashful-looking sailor, with weatherbeaten face and frowzy hair, his big sea-boots and rough coat odoriferous with tar, shambled into the room.

"You are the man that brought this letter?" said the lady, in French.

"*Way, madame,*" said honest Jean, in the vile patois of the coast, meaning "*oui, madame.*"

"How and where did you receive it?"

As well as she could understand from his broad dialect Jean said that a ship-of-war had brought him to, in the channel, and the letter had been given to him by a "gros Monsieur Anglais" to deliver to the lady in Brest; that the "gros monsieur" seemed to be very angry with a certain "petit officer" whose prisoner he seemed to be, and that he, Jean, heard that this little officer was none other than the terrible "corsaire American, Monsieur Poljean."

"Paul Jones," said the lady, thoughtfully. "Strange that such a common and prosaic name should be so much dreaded here. I wish that I could see this man. They tell me he is the most desperate pirate since the days of Kidd. Who knows what wrongs he may have suffered to embitter him against his native land so; for they say he is a Scot. I wish I could see him, and know if he really is the wretch that people call him."

She drew out her purse to give a gratuity to the sailor, and found his eyes steadily fixed on hers, from under the shaggy penthouse of hair that overhung his forehead. As she held out the money, he started, ducked his head in a sort of bow, and gabbled a profusion of thanks.

Something in his manner and face puzzled Lady Flora, but she said nothing; and the fisherman backed out of the room in the same lumbering, awkward style in which he had entered, nearly knocking down Miss Rosalie, who was at her old tricks at the keyhole.

The door slammed, and the fisherman lumbered down the passage, but as he went, much to Rosalie's surprise, he caught her by the arm and took her with him till they stopped in the end of the dark corridor.

Then the man addressed the girl in a low tone but in perfectly pure French.

"Come hither, little one, I would speak with thee."

And the same gold-piece Lady Flora had given fell softly into Rosalie's willing palm.

The girl followed him without more ado.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EARL OF SELKIRK.

THE Earl of Selkirk, placid and well preserved as ever, with the same delicate white hands, of which he was justly proud, sat in his easy-chair, in luxurious apartments at St. James', sipping his chocolate, in morning-gown and slippers:

The earl was enjoying his freedom from family cares with great relish, and had done so for more than two years past. His daughter, Flora, the only object of anxiety, was safely and well married; the Government was always courteous and willing to oblige the powerful Earl of Selkirk; and the American rebellion was, to all appearance, on its last legs. Lord Selkirk felt that he was entitled to enjoy his *otium cum dignitate*, and he did enjoy it.

"Louis," said the old nobleman, handing back the cup to his waiting valet, "you can tell Monsieur Anatole that his chocolate is as near perfection as human nature allows. He is worthy to be *chef de cuisine* to his majesty himself."

"Milor is too good," returned the obsequious Louis. "Would milor wish to see ze papaire zis morning?"

"Certainly," said the earl, lazily. "If there is any news, point out the place, Louis."

The valet was in the act of obedience, when a thundering knock at the street door startled his master to that extent that the irritable old peer rapped out a hasty oath, and exclaimed:

"What the devil can people mean by raising such a disturbance before the sun's fairly up." [It was nearly noon, by the by.] "Go down, Louis, and give the fellow that gave that knock a sound rating. It's positively outrageous!"

And the old peer wrapped his gown round him with a peevish shiver, as Louis left the room, grumbling:

"That fellow never will learn to slip through a door, and keep the draught off me, although he knows how delicate I am. I fear I shall have to give him warning."

And Lord Selkirk kept on soliloquizing ill-temperedly for some minutes, not hearing or heeding an increasing noise below stairs, till it became too loud to longer escape attention. Doors opened and shut, there was a thumping and rumbling as of heavy articles being moved, and voices were audible approaching the room.

Then the door opened, and the earl, half-incredulous, half-peevisishly shivering, turned round in his chair, and beheld the form of his only daughter, Lady Flora Burton, standing in the doorway, regarding him sadly. Then she rushed forward, and burst into tears, sobbing on his shoulder the words:

"Oh, father, father! I'm so glad to be home again!"

The old peer looked completely amazed, but his Sybarite nature prevailed over his affection, as he said:

"My dear Flora, I'm delighted to see you, of course—but—*do they have any doors where you've been traveling, my child?* I'm chilled to death."

Lady Flora extricated herself from his arms as if she had been stung. She walked quietly to the door and shut it.

"So am I, father," was all she said.

Then she took a seat on the opposite side of the fire, and dried her eyes in silence.

The earl looked nervous and fidgety.

"What makes you?—what's the matter, Flora?—why didn't you send word you were coming, my dear? Where is Captain Burton?"

"At sea, my lord."

"At sea!" echoed the old man, peevisishly. "Why didn't I get word of it before? When is he coming back?"

"I don't know, my lord," said Lady Flora, quietly. "One thing I do know, that he and I never live under the same roof again."

Lord Selkirk started, and raised his eyebrows incredulously.

"What do you mean, Flora?"

"I mean this, my lord. Since I have been married to that man I have suffered every species of indignity that a woman could possibly submit to and live, and now I am free from his hateful presence, I intend to apply for a separation at once, on the terms of my marriage-settlement."

Lord Selkirk looked more and more thoughtful as she proceeded. He pursed up his mouth and shook his head gravely when she had finished.

"My dear child, can not the matter be hushed up? Consider. It will provoke a great scandal. Lord Burleigh and I are great friends, and if you break with his son—" he pause expectantly.

Lady Flora smiled bitterly.

"I see," she said, in a low tone. "You had rather your laughter should continue to be a slave to a devil in human form than that your political friendships should be disturbed. Well, my lord, then I stand on my rights under the settlement. I wish a separation from my husband. The proofs necessary I will furnish the solicitor, if your lordship will allow me to employ Mr. Taxley. One thing I am determined on, never to go back to Captain Burton. I suppose your lordship can spare me one of your places to live in, if I pay the expenses from my mother's fortune?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly," said the earl, uneasily. "You may have St. Mary's, my dear, with great pleasure. Mr. Taxley will attend to the business for you, of course. But isn't there any way the thing can be smoothed over? You know that I hate difficulties, Flora; and really, my health is too delicate to bear much agitation."

Lady Flora rose.

"Your health shall not suffer, my lord," she said. "I will own that I expected a little sympathy in my trouble. Remember, I have never told you of all my trials till now. I have kept silent, resolved to endure what could not be cured, and I have done so till endurance became cowardice. Now I will trouble you no longer, my lord. Mr. Taxley will attend to the necessary business for me. I am much obliged to you for the use of St. Mary's Abbey, and accept it. Good-morning, my lord."

She swept a proud curtesy and was gone.

Lord Selkirk looked decidedly mean as he sat shrunk up in his arm-chair over the fire. He took refuge, as usual in such cases, in ill-temper, peevishly muttering:

"What a strange thing it is these women are never satisfied. There was Lady Selkirk just the same when she was

alive. A man couldn't have a little gayety or take a trip to Paris, but what my lady was up in arms, wanting God knows what. It's astonishing how similar Flora's case is. Burton's a good fellow—I never found him such a ruffian—a little gay perhaps—but then men can't turn monks at thirty; and Burton's been a gay youth all his life. Well, well, I swear I won't interfere. Taxley can do all the business if he likes. I can't quarrel with Burleigh, and I won't on account of this headstrong girl. Gad, I fancy a few months at St. Mary's will bore her to death, and she'll be wild to come to town. My lady may be ready by that time to make up with Burton. Pooh! pooh! It may not be so bad after all. Where's Louis? Give me that paper again."

The silent and obsequious valet handed his master the paper, pointing to a leader, headed: "*The Notorious Pirate.*"

Lord Selkirk read as follows, growing more and more indignant at every line, interspersed as it was with flaming capitals.

"A strange Vessel, said to be a *Rebel* and *Pirate*, hath been seen hovering on the southern coast of Ireland lately, and several fishing-boats hath the Audacious Villain captured. The Terrible Ruffian seemeth to have grown Bold with long impunity, and actually chased one of His Most Gracious Majesty's Revenue Vessels into Milford Haven, sailing so close that the Inhabitants of the Town could distinctly note the rig of his ship. It is reported to be Amazingly Swift and Heavily Armed, commanded by that Notorious Renegade Paul Jones, a Villain said to be of Scotch Birth though of this there existeth no Certainty. The Commander of the Cutter SPITEFUL reporteth the Ruffian to be a Man of Enormous Stature, with Fiery Eyes, and loaded with All Sorts of Terrible Weapons. His Vessel is said to be Able to Sail in the Wind's Eye, though this likewise, is not certainly known. His Most Gracious Majesty hath been pleased to order out the Sloop of War Drake, and the Frigate Peerless in pursuit of the Unhinged Rascal, with orders to Show No Quarter, if either of the twain seeth him. The Hon. Captain Septimus Burton hath been Ordered to take command of the Drake, lying at Carrickfergus, opposite Belfast."

"Good news!" cried the old peer, excitedly. "Give it to

the accursed rebel, Burton! Blow him out of the water, and I'll forgive thee! I'll take care of Flora, once thou helpest thy king to put down this accursed rebellion!"

CHAPTER VIII.

H. M. S. DRAKE.

A GLOOMY and tempestuous day was settling into evening over the Irish Channel, when the officer of the watch, pacing the quarter-deck of the British sloop-of-war Drake, twenty guns, paused in his sulky meditations over the distance of supper, to gaze seaward.

The Drake was lying at a single anchor, in the open roadstead of Carrickfergus, the gale whistling through the shrouds and back-stays, and the ship pitching heavily, with a short, uneasy motion.

The vessel was snug under crossed top-sail yards, the crew piped to supper, and the officers anxiously expecting their own. The Hon. Captain Septimus Burton had assumed command three days before, but the Hon. Captain, after waiting for two days, exercising the crew at broadside guns morning and evening, had suddenly become convinced that his redoubtable adversary, the rebel Paul Jones, had given up all thoughts of attacking the Drake. Wherefore the Hon. Capt. had seized the first opportunity to go ashore, being smitten with the charms of a certain Miss Julia Daly, of the town of Carrickfergus, who favored the handsome captain, not knowing him except as a bachelor.

The officer of the deck happened to be the third lieutenant, Mr. Vernon by name, a smart young officer, fond of the ladies himself, and very sulky at being out in the cold, while his lazy commander was enjoying himself ashore.

Mr. Vernon, gloomily meditating, that "the service is going to the dogs," according to naval habit, was suddenly roused from his meditations by catching sight of the sails of a ship, close-hauled, rounding the land south-east, and keeping her course direct for the Drake.

"Who the deuce can that be?" soliloquized Vernon, sulkily. "Perhaps the Peerless, coming to hunt up the skipper and set him to work to look after that Yankee pirate. By Jove, I wish it was Paul Jones! It would make old Burton ashamed of himself, to be caught ashore when he ought to be fighting his ship. The service is going to the dogs, when captains set such an example to their officers."

"Sail, ho! Strange ship signaling!" bellowed the look-out aloft.

"How long since you woke, up there?" answered Vernon, politely. "Is that a blind tailor or a cock-eyed cobbler you've got up there on the cross-trees, that he can't see a ship before the deck does?"

He turned sulkily to a quarter-gunner.

"Pass the word to Mr. Howard for signals.

The gunner touched his cap and disappeared, while Vernon took a long look at the stranger through his glass.

That the approaching vessel was a man-of-war, a landsman could have told. The neatness of her appearance, as she bowled along under whole topsails, spanker and jibs, without a superfluous stick or rag exhibited, would have told this. The streaming blue pennant that fluttered like a coach-whip from the main-truck, was an ornament only used by king's vessels, and the stranger was signaling the Drake as she came.

In a few moments a curly-headed middy shot upon deck, with glass and signal-book, and examined the stranger carefully.

"Well, well—who is she?" asked Vernon, impatiently.

"She shows the Peerless' number, sir," said the boy, respectfully, "and asks—'Is the captain aboard?'"

"No, curse it, no! Signal—'No!'" said Vernon, angrily. "Tell them he's ashore after the girls, if there's such a signal Tommy."

Tommy Howard grinned.

"Please, sir, there ain't any girls in the book. Shall I signal that Captain Burton's ashore, Mr. Vernon?"

"Yes," said the officer, sulkily. "It'll serve him just right."

Tommy touched his cap. Up went the gay-colored flags to the masthead, and down went those of the stranger, fol-

lowed by a new set, which went up in answer to those of the Drake.

At that moment the sun, sinking close to the horizon, peeped out for a moment in a flood of glory from under the clouds, and illuminated the stranger, not more than half a mile off, with a ruddy blaze of light.

The signal-midshipman examined the flags carefully, and seemed puzzled. He turned to the book and skimmed rapidly over the leaves, buzzing the number of the signal to himself.

"Well, Tommy—well? What does she say?" asked Vernon.

By this time the news of a strange vessel approaching had flown through the ship. Heads peeped up the hatches; and at the same moment the gold-banded cap of the first lieutenant appeared over the companionway, as the executive officer stepped on deck.

"She says, sir—if you don't believe it, look here, sir—'*Clear for action!*'"

"Hey! What's that—what's that?" cried Grey, the first lieutenant, startled.

"Strange ship shows number of Peerless, and signals—'*Clear for action!*'" said Tommy, rapidly.

Mr. Grey snatched the glass from the boy, and looked at the stranger one moment. Then he yelled out, excitedly:

"That's not the Peerless! She's a fifty! Beat to quarters! Where's the boatswain? Gunner—gunner! *Clear for action!* Where the fiends is that drummer?"

In a moment a frightened-looking boy, with a big drum, rushed up, and the long roll echoed through the lately silent ship, waking it like magic into life and activity. The men came tumbling out on deck with marvelous rapidity and flew to the broadside guns, while for a moment all seemed confusion. The arm-chests were flung open, and cutlasses and boarding-pikes scattered on deck with a desperation and hurry that told of the sudden surprise. The gunner was so excited that he nearly broke the key in the lock of the magazine door and the powder-monkeys were dancing frantically up and down the ladders, yelling for cartridges.

The only men that seemed to preserve their coolness in the

emergency were those of the small guard of marines, who paraded as steadily as machines on the quarter-deck, unmindful of the clamor and the approaching stranger.

That the latter was an enemy was painfully evident. He came on like a race-horse, close-hauled, and with his head laid for the Drake's weather-bow, as the latter swung to the strong tide, end on to the stranger. Already he was within a cable's length, when a heavy squall came on, and the sun set. The stranger's bows were seen to fly off from the wind, which was blowing dead on shore, and he wore round across the Drake's lee-bow, letting fly a whole broadside of grape and canister into the English man-of-war, at short pistol-shot.

The crash of splinters, the howling of the squall, the shrieks of the wounded, the thundering echoes of the guns, reverberating from the hills of Carrickfergus—all formed a terrible Babel of confusion for some minutes. The splash of an anchor from the stranger's bows, during the broadside, was not noticed, till its effects were manifest, as his vessel swung round to the tide with sails clewed up and all aback, apparently designing to lay the Drake aboard, despite wind and tempest.

As yet the Englishman had not been able to fire a shot!

Taken completely by surprise, the gunner had but just succeeded in opening the magazine, when that tempest of iron swept the decks, and drove the men from their guns. It seemed as if the king's ship lay completely at the mercy of the stranger.

But such are the accidents of war, that the next moment the danger was over. The anchor, let drop on purpose to come athwart hawse of the Drake's cable, fell far to leeward. The strange vessel drove rapidly inland, and when the cable checked her, she was near a quarter of a mile to leeward of the English sloop-of-war, with a fierce gale blowing her shoreward.

The breathing-spell was all-sufficient to put the Drake in a state of defense, and the stranger's opportunity was gone, while his own position became extremely hazardous. Under these circumstances, the strange commander displayed the qualities of a bold seaman. Up went his topsails again, spread to the gale, and his vessel began to gather way, even at her anchor. The courses were set, with a daring that

smacked of overconfidence in her masts; and in a moment more the mysterious cruiser stretched slowly out of Lough Belfast, heeling over till her weather-guns pointed at the sky, and passing the Drake's stern with perfect fearlessness. The wind seemed to increase every moment; and the crew of the English corvette were too busy securing guns and hatches, to mind the enemy; for the sea came sweeping in over the forecastle in great green cataracts, that really threatened to swamp the vessel.

"By George! he's slipped his cable, and he's standing out to sea!" muttered Vernon, as he caught a glimpse of the stranger, crawling like a white ghost across the face of the cliffs, astern, half an hour after.

The storm grew worse and worse. It blew great guns. The stranger was seen no more that night, and Mr. Grey remarked next morning, at breakfast in the gun-room, the storm having blown out at last:

"By Gad, gentlemen, that was either Paul Jones, or the devil, last night!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPECTER CORVETTE.

LADY FLORA BURTON was seated in an arm-chair, not far from the breakfast-table, on which lay her almost untasted breakfast.

The room was a bright, pleasant apartment in the south side of the west wing of the old Abbey of St. Mary's, that composed, with its modern additions, the Earl of Selkirk's seat. A large bay-window with Gothic mullions and stained glass border, commanded a view of Solway Firth, and nearer by, of the garden at St. Mary's.

Lady Flora seemed thoughtful and sad, but the worried look of yore was gone from her face; and she appeared peaceful at last.

Little Fidele, the lap-dog, was curled up comfortably on her lap; and Rosalie, singularly humble and deprecating in

manner now, was still in waiting. Strange to say, Lady Flora had retained her in her employment, without noticing her past conduct, and Rosalie had become a perfect treasure of silent obedience, since the captain's absence.

Outside, the gale, which had blown hard from the south-east all night, was fading away in the morning sunlight; and a few heavy white masses of clouds, chasing each other over the sky, were all the sensible remnants of last night's storm.

Lady Flora looked out to sea, and her eyes rested musingly on the motions of a distant ship, that seemed to be standing off and on, in the offing, and gradually edging toward St. Mary's. The object of her vision, however, seemed to be far from her thoughts, for she turned to Rosalie presently, with the question:

"Has the mail-bag come, Rosalie?"

"Oui, miladi," and Rosalie disappeared for a moment, to return with a large canvas bag, which she handed to her mistress, along with a key. Lady Flora looked at her keenly.

"Has the bag been opened this morning, Rosalie?"

"Non, miladi," and Rosalie looked the picture of unsuspecting innocence.

Lady Flora unlocked the mail-bag, and drew forth some letters. Four or five she laid aside, with a murmured, "Pshaw! condolences." A sixth was a big yellow concern, sealed and bound with red tape. This also she laid aside with the remark, "Taxley will keep." There were only two remaining to her own address, and there was a single one in the bottom, which contained the superscription, "*Mademoiselle Rosalie Duparcq, St. Mary's, Scotland.*"

Lady Flora looked hard at the superscription.

"Strange!" she murmured. "Is it possible for two men to write so much alike?"

She handed the letter to Rosalie, and the girl blushed violently as she received it.

"Oh! miladi!" she exclaimed, impulsively; "it is *mon fiancé*, Charles, who has written at last."

And Rosalie kissed the letter with exaggerated rapture

Lady Flora coughed slightly. She was a good woman, but

she could not resist the opportunity of a merited punishment.

"Your *fiancé* will be a happy man, if he is not proud, Rosalie," she observed, dryly. "He must have a *very trusting nature* if he loves you."

And she turned to her own letters.

She did not see the sudden glare of hate that shot up into Rosalie's eyes, behind her back, nor the white teeth that clenched themselves so firmly. For a moment Rosalie looked like a devil. Then she quietly smiled—a very evil smile, worse than the look—and retired to the end of the room, where she opened and read her letter, glancing keenly over it at her mistress all the while.

Lady Flora took up her last letters. One she dropped as if it burnt her. She knew the bold, sprawling characters of her husband too well.

"Has he come to his senses?" she muttered, bitterly. "Ten thousand a year, settled on a wife, is a strong bond of union. I miscalculated my lord's prudence. He has received Mr. Taxley's notice, no doubt, and wishes to make peace. Let it lie there till I can find heart to read it. Now for the last."

She picked up the last letter, and turned it over to look at the address. As she did so the blood forsook her cheeks, and she remained staring stupidly at the letter. "Lady Flora *Selkirk*, St. Mary's Abbey," was all the address, and the post-mark was "Kirkudbright." But the writing! She could not mistake it, any more than Burton's.

It was the hand of her old lover, John Paul, the first time in four years!

Lady Flora dropped the letter on her lap, and sat, as if turned to stone, gazing dreamily out of the window.

As she did so, it seemed that a change came over the scene outside. The wind had shifted round by the south, and was now coming from the south-west, rolling up gray masses of vapor, that had suddenly risen from the sea like ghosts, which already shut in the view of Whitehaven and came sweeping on, at race-horse speed, toward St. Mary's. Above the fog, within a mile of the land, could be seen the tall masts of a ship, bare and naked, while below them appeared the square outlines of three top-sails and bare poles

below them again, the hull of the vessel that supported them being lost to view in the fog. The whole vision had a strange and spectral appearance, that was increased as the rising fog slowly crept up the masts, and swallowed up the top-sails.

The vessel, whatever it might be, was a man-of-war, carrying the British flag, with the wind on her starboard quarter, coming to St. Mary's. Lady Flora's eye, used to ships of war since her marriage, recognized this fact in a moment, in the midst of her dismay at the receipt of a letter from her old lover, and she hastily hid it in her bosom, murmuring:

"It must be Burton! He has heard I am here, and is coming to torment me again."

Mademoiselle Rosalie, apparently absorbed in her letter, lost nothing of this. She smiled triumphantly and concealed her own letter, while her mistress watched the specter-like vision of the strange cruiser, as the fog crept up, higher and higher, till every thing was swallowed up in the gray veil.

Then Lady Flora turned to Rosalie.

"You can go, Rosalie," she said, quietly. "I shall not need you for an hour."

Rosalie retired like a shadow, and Lady Flora, with a heavy sigh, broke open the letter that had so agitated her.

It ran as follows:

"If Lady Flora Selkirk would be free of a hateful slavery, that I have discovered too late to avert its misery, the means of deliverance are in her own hands. I do not reproach you for breaking the solemn troth-plight that bound us once. I know the terrible pressure that was brought to bear on you, and also the punishment you have suffered since then—"

"God knoweth it," groaned the unhappy lady, dropping the letter and hiding her face. "Oh, John, John! Had I but had courage in that time of trial, I should not now be shuddering betwixt the two dangers, eternal misery and the temptation to guilt."

She wept silently for some moments, and at last resumed the letter:

"I have visited your house in disguise," went on the writer; "I have fathomed all the cruelty of Burton, and the duplicity of your servants; not an action of yours is unwatched, even now; and I shall be ever near you in future, if you love me

as you once did. Flora, you are mine in God's sight, and I shall soon claim you, when your tyrant is no more. Trust in me, and all shall be well. Walk every evening in the abbey garden, and I will be there on the night of the anniversary of our parting. I have much to tell and much to ask. I am no longer the humble sailor I was once. All Britain has heard of me by this time, and when another month shall have past, they shall tremble at my name. Surrounded by foes, defying all the power of the king, my single vessel has run the gantlet of his fleets in triumph. Be but mine at last, and the admiral shall forget the treason to the sailor; and you shall be queen of the seas, with the scepter snatched from Britannia's boastful grasp by your still true lover. J. P."

When Lady Flora had finished, she sat gazing out seaward, as if benumbed. She could not understand it all. It seemed like a dream. While she gazed vacantly out on the driving fog, that now covered the garden itself and obscured every thing, a red flash lighted up the gloom, and the dull, heavy report of a cannon echoed far out to sea.

Lady Flora started up and listened intently.

A second, third and fourth followed in quick succession, and a much lighter and sharper report was heard from another quarter.

"My God!" whispered the lady, with pale face: "it must be he! What has he become, and who is he, to roam these English seas, swarming with foes, single-handed?"

As if in answer to the question, the next moment Rosalie rushed in, followed by two or three frightened girls, and gasped out:

"Oh, miladi! Let us say our prayers. De end of de world is coming. Outside, *sur le mer*, on de sea, dey say, is de terrible pirate, de horrible corsaire, Monsieur le Capitaine Poljeán, and he come to kill us all!"

"Paul Jones! Paul Jones!" echoed the terrified girls beside her, pointing, shuddering, seaward.

It was all quiet there now. The guns had ceased, and the fog hid every thing.

CHAPTER V.

THE DECOY SPY.

THE little town of Whitehaven was preparing for its mighty est, and the fog, that had brooded over the town all day long, now covered silent and nearly deserted streets. Only in the ale-houses round the port, lights still gleamed; and the sounds of rough voices in revelry could be heard in the sanded bar-rooms of more than one.

Especially in the "Culloden Arms," the noted resort of sailors, revenue marine, and soldiers from the batteries, was the clamor great. The fog in the streets outside was nothing compared to the clouds of smoke that filled the bar-room, puffed from dozens of pipes.

Some twenty or thirty coast-guard men, soldiers in undress, and merchant sailors or fishermen, were bellowing out, "God save the King," with a gushing loyalty lightened by plentiful beer, and none of them noticed the entrance of a short, thickset man, in sou'-wester and pea-jacket, whose huge sea-boots shone with rain.

This individual steered his way through the smoke, and came to anchor at one of the tables, where the observant bar-maid soon supplied him with a mug of beer and a pipe, in obedience to his hoarse whisper.

When the chorus stopped, however, the quiet stranger speedily created a great sensation, for every one there "twigged him," as the saying was, at once.

Whispers arose, "Who's him, Bob?" "Blaust my hies if I know." "Never see'd him afore." "A stranger."

The short man took no notice till he saw that every one was looking at him, when he asked, in the same hoarse whisper in which he had addressed the barmaid:

"What in blazes are yez all looking at?—Didn't yez ever see a sailor forced into a strange harbor afore?"

"Ay, ay, my man," said a big fellow in a sergeant's uniform, with an air of drunken sagacity. "But then, you see,

these are dangerous times, and his blessed majesty's officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, are entitled to ax questions. Who be you?"

"I'm a poor fisherman from Carrickfergus," said the other, sulkily; "and bedad, av you had been tr'ated as I have, you'd drive his blessed majesty into Davy Jones's locker for not clearin' the says of that bloody, murderin' pirate, Paul Jones."

It was surprising to hear what a hush fell on the whole room as the fisherman pronounced the dreaded name. Not a word was spoken, till the sergeant slowly inquired:

"Paul Jones! Have you indeed seen and suffered from him?"

"I have that same," said the fisherman, vindictively. "Didn't the dirty blackguard saze me, and me a-fishin', innocent-like; and he made me get aboard and play pilot for him, bad luck to him, and me wid a murderin' ruffian houldin' a pistol close to me head, to blow out me brains, av she grazed a rock. Ah, bathershin!"

And the Irish fisherman groaned, in bitterness of spirit.

The curiosity of his hearers now increased. One of the coast-guard men, who seemed the most considerable person in the company, winked to the barmaid as a signal to supply the stranger with something to drink, while he himself cleared his throat, and observed:

"Well, my good fellow," and how did you get away from the pirate? And where is he now?"

"Ah, bedad, he's far enough now," said the fisherman, dryly. "Av he wasn't, I wouldn't be here. He tuk me out, and left me in a boat in the say, and the last thing I saw he was headin' for the Frinch coast, at siventeen knots an hoor."

"Indeed," said the revenue officer, rubbing his hands "That is very interesting, upon my word. And how did you get here?"

"Bedad, I rowed here," said the stranger, quietly. "Did ye hear guns to-day, b'ys?"

"No," said the sergeant. "The wind was off shore, and the fog thick."

"Bedad, then, ye must be deaf. The pirate tuk a revenue cutter, out in the Firth, and there was five or six guns fired

by both on 'em. When he'd got her, he pulled foot for the channel, and put me in a boat to row here."

"Then the scoundrel will run into a hornet's nest," said the revenue officer, triumphantly. "The whole channel fleet has been ordered to cruise around Land's End, and watch the Irish channel for him; so he's caught."

"Who knows?" suggested a bystander. "He may hear of it, and come back this way. What sort of a looking man is this pirate, friend?"

"Bedad, av ye foind out, ye're a wiser man than Mick Doolan," said the fisherman. "One day he's one thing, another he's another, and bedad av he was to be standing in this very room amongst yez all, I wouldn't be surprised. I wouldn't know him meself."

"But I always heard that he was a man of gigantic stature, with a fiery eye. 'Twas in the Gazette, his full description," said the sergeant, eagerly.

"I can't tell," said Mr. Doolan, carelessly, "'kase it's mostly the liftinants of the ship I saw, and the pirate himself keeps in the cabin. Av he comes up here, he'll give yer ould town a shakin', I'll go bail."

"Bah!" said the sergeant. "Haven't we got forts and guns enough to blow him out of the water?"

"And how many guns have ye got?" asked Doolan, sarcastically. "Have ye enough to fight twenty-eight thirty-two-pounders of a side? Sure and that's the metal he carries, the thafe."

This tremendous exaggeration was doubly impressive at the period of which we write, when the heaviest corvettes only carried twelve-pounders, when carronades were almost unknown, and thirty-two-pounders were only found on the lower decks of line-of-battle ships. It produced a very profound effect in the bar-room, a hush falling on all present. The sergeant, somewhat timidly, made his answer:

"Nay, friend, not so bad as that. We have two water batteries of four eighteen-pounders, but they will be stoutly defended, while English blood flows in our veins; and we expect the Blenheim, seventy-four, here inside of a week. The pirate surely can not cope with him."

"Bedad, I don't know," said Mr. Doolan, shaking his head,

wisely. "The divil helps his own, they say. Are yer batteries heavily manned, sargeant?"

"Not as heavy as I could wish," returned the sergeant, modestly. "But there's enough to handle the guns, in case the audacious villain make an attempt on the place."

Mr. Doolan made no answer. He was too busy refilling his pipe; after which he applied himself to a glass of hot toddy, which had been pressed on him, free of charge, by the curious custom-house officer.

The Irish fisherman was somewhat unsteady, as he rose from his seat, lighted his pipe at a candle, and observed:

"Bedad, I believe I've got all I want now, and I'll be goin' home. I have a cousin over beyant, on the south-wist road, that'll give me a bed till mornin', and I'll be afther wishin' ye good-night, gintlemen, and bad luck to the dirty blackguard, Paul Jones."

"Amen!" was the universal response, as Mr. Doolan, smoking in quick, short puffs, Irish fashion, approached the door, and went out into the muggy, misty night; leaving the bar-room loungers to discuss the wonderful revelations just made to them, and magnify the deeds of audacious villainy of the absent Paul Jones, till Satan could hardly have held a candle to him.

Meanwhile the author of all this talk, the Irish fisherman, Doolan, once outside the "Culloden Arms," walked as steady as a judge. He turned up the collar of his pea-jacket to fence out the nipping chill of the raw night-air, and walked down a narrow side street that led to the quay.

The tide was almost out, and a waste of black mud, gleaming oozily in the light of a solitary oil-lamp, was seamed with pools and streams of water, slowly diminishing, and crowded with the dark hulls of clumsy collier brigs, whose masts made a forest above, half-hidden in the fallen mist.

A figure started out from the angle of a house, and approached the fisherman.

"All right, captain!" it said, in a low voice. "We've spiked eight guns, and gagged twenty soldiers. Are there any more, sir?"

"No," answered the other, in the same tone. "I have been into the bar-room, and pumped the sergeant of one bat-

tery. There are but two. Are you all ready to set fire to the vessels, Mr. Wallingford?"

"I guess so, sir," was the answer. "Shall I give the signal?"

"Ay."

A long, low, trembling whistle echoed through the streets of Whitehaven, and in a moment a crowd of men came stealing down from numerous hiding-places. The disguised officer took the pipe from his mouth, and scattered the burning ashes on the ground, where they instantly expired, with a slight hiss, in the mud-puddles.

Then there was a succession of whispered orders, and the men were separated into small parties, of equal numbers, apparently under control of officers, though all alike wore pea-jackets and sou'-westers. A short discussion followed between the officers, when the one called Mr. Wallingford approached the captain, saluted and said:

"There's not a candle or a match in the command, captain. What can we do?"

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRE IN THE HOLD.

THE disguised captain started, and stamped his feet angrily.

"What's the reason, sir? What's the reason?" he asked. "Did they not bring the candles, as I told them?"

"They did, sir," said Wallingford, respectfully; "but you ordered them to be hidden in dark-lanterns, and the consequence is they have burned out unobserved. They've got a heap of shavings in a tar-barrel down in the hold of an empty brig yonder, but not a light can be obtained, for all the shops are shut up, and the beer-houses are closing."

The American leader ground his teeth in bitter disappointment.

"And after all my measures succeeding, am I to be foiled

by a miserable little obstacle like this? No, by the light of heaven! I'll make these proud Britons repent of their burnings of helpless traders on our coast, if I have to bombard the town with the Ranger's batteries. Mr. Wallingford, take the men back to the boats, and get ready to leave. I will get a light and fire the ships, myself. Let my own boat be pulled alongside of the vessel you have prepared, and leave the rest to me."

Wallingford touched his cap and turned away to the men. The parties, a moment before organized to carry fire into all the shipping lying at Whitehaven, were redistributed into boats'-crews, and moved off down the long pier to where they had left the boats lying.

As they started on their return, much dispirited by the unlooked-for obstacle to complete success, the rapid dash of oars, coming up the harbor, was plainly audible; and as if by one consent, the whole party halted to listen.

The approaching boat was heard to bump against the landing-stairs, at the end of the pier, the only practicable place at low water, and a loud voice spoke, saying:

"Stay where you are till I return, boys. We have to row to St. Mary's, to-night."

The American commander muttered a deep oath under his breath. Then he said to Wallingford, hurriedly:

"Into the boats, at once. I know that man's voice well. Remember the orders. My gig at the vessel's side where the fire is. Quick!"

He turned away and proceeded rapidly toward the "Culloden Arms," which he reëntered with a simulated stagger, as of intoxication, and found full of people as before, if possible still drunker.

"Hey, boys!" burst out the seeming Irishman, with a howl, "what the divil d'yer have such mane, shlippery strates for, to make a dacent lad fall down and smash his pipe and scatter the fire all over the place, bad luck to it. Molly, me darlin', give me a fresh pipe, av ye love me, and a light and tobaccy, or I'll go clane dead for the want of a draw, so I will."

"How are ye again?" "Hooray for Mr. Doolan!" and such like expressions were heard all round the room, while the bar-

maid brought the pipe as requested, and the disguised leader filled it.

Lucifer matches were an unknown luxury in those days, when flint and steel, tinder and sulphur-matches were the only means known of obtaining fire. The pretended Doolan quickly had a large, glowing light in the end of his pipe, and carelessly slipped half a dozen matches into the pocket of his jacket, observing :

" 'Tis a mighty onconvenient thing to be widout fire, b'ys. Nobody knows it that hasn't tried it. Now I'm good to rache me cousin's."

He was about turning to the door, regardless of the many invitations to drink, when the bell on the entrance rung, and the tall form of Hon. Capt. Septimus Burton entered the room, the mist-drops glittering on the oiled-silk cover of his cocked hat, and all over the sea-cloak in which he was muffled.

Now, indeed, the position of the American leader was one of desperate peril. His face was almost entirely undisguised, and the sou'-wester and pea-jacket would not hide it from recognition if the other fairly caught sight of it. Affecting an air of slouching drunkenness, he pulled down the oil-skin hat over his eyes, and lurched for the doorway, past the naval officer. His departure was all the easier because every man in the room, belonging to either service, was so much occupied with the appearance of a naval commander in uniform—an object rarely seen in such a common tavern—that they were gazing intently at him.

The American captain gained the doorway, puffing columns of smoke as he went, and Burton threw back the wet sea-cloak, revealing his full uniform to view, as he called out :

" Some of you men will wish that you were attending to your duties to-night, instead of getting drunk in here. Do you know that the pirate, Paul Jones, lies in the roads outside here, with his guns bearing on this very house ?"

The disguised fisherman waited for no more. He slipped through the doorway, and in another instant was hurrying down the narrow, wet street to the quay, a train of sparks flying as he went, muttering :

" Now or never ! Curse the luck that brought *him* here !"
Every man in the bar-room was on his feet in a moment,

and a Babel of voices arose around Burton, which the latter quickly silenced, exerting his powerful voice to its full strength.

"Silence, every man of you! Do you think I rowed across the channel, at the risk of my life, through the fog, to listen to your tomfoolery? Where's the senior sergeant of the coast-guard here?"

That individual presented himself with drunken solemnity.

"Have you had any boats out to-day?"

"No, sir. Fog's been too thick."

"Did you hear any guns at eleven this morning?"

"No, sir."

"Fools! The pirate made a dash at my ship lying at anchor at Carrickfergus, last night, and almost disabled her. And now I've pulled and sailed across here to warn you all, and I passed close under the stern of his vessel in the fog, not an hour ago. Have you seen any strangers to-night?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

And the sergeant rapidly recounted the particulars of the Irish fisherman's visit to the bar-room, a short time before. Burton listened intently, asked a few questions about the man's appearance, and when informed that he had been within two feet of him a moment before, burst out:

"Gracious Powers of heaven! 'Twas the pirate himself, I'll swear. Why didn't you stop him, fools, dolts, idiots that you are!"

The astonished sergeant was about replying, when the door burst open, and a scared-looking man rushed in, exclaiming:

"Fire! fire! The vessels aground in the harbor have caught fire, and the brig Mary Jane's a-burning like a piece of paper! Help, men!"

Through the wide-open door came the strongest confirmation of the story. The doorway commanded a view of the harbor, and of the crowd of colliers half sunk in the mud. In the very midst of these, a thin column of flame, half hidden in gray smoke, was slowly rising up to view; and as they looked, it burst up in a bright red glare, reflected far and wide from the smoke and revealing the black forest of masts in startling relief.

"'Tis the pirate's work! To the batteries quick!" shouted the English commander in stentorian tones. "Paul Jones is in this town, and there are enough men to take him if you're true Britons. Follow me, and I'll show you. I am Captain Burton of the Drake, and I call on every man to follow me in the king's name!"

A loud cheer was the answer, as the motley crowd of Bacchanalians broke up, and rushed out into the muggy, misty night.

Once there, the town was aroused in an incredibly short space of time. Men ran from house to house, bellowing and knocking; and the awful cry of "FIRE!" alternating with the equally dreaded name of the renowned cruiser, brought people to window and door, and then again out into the street, half dressed, and armed with every sort of weapon, from carving-knife or poker up to a rusty old blunderbuss of Oliver Cromwell's time.

Shouting their cries of "Paul Jones!" and "Fire!" the crowd dashed toward the harbor, with buckets in hand to extinguish the flames, while soldiers, marines, and coast-guard men, alike made their way to the batteries with the instinct of discipline.

The fire increased to a broad red glare and began to spread rapidly seaward toward other vessels, as the wind, which had just begun to veer about, blew fresh and sharp from the east. The thickest of the vessels, however, lay to the east; and the fire, which had been first kindled with a view to its being fanned by the wind from just the opposite quarter, would only have to consume five or six more vessels to die out from lack of nutriment. At the same time, the rapidly freshening wind appeared to increase its fierceness to a great extent, and the fog, rapidly lifting above the town, afforded a speedy sight of the tranquil stars overhead, while below all was strife and turmoil.

Captain Burton exhibited wonderful energy and activity in the emergency. His huge form was conspicuous on the quays, rushing to and fro, and issuing mandates in all directions in right of his seniority. The men with buckets were formed in line under his orders, and the process of fighting with fire was speedily begun. Not a symptom could be seen

of the enemy's boats at first, in the fog. The launch of the Drake, in which Burton had come, still lay at the water-stairs, and the coxswain was in the act of replying to the captain as to what he had observed, when a sudden and general cry of alarm from the people caused Burton to look seaward.

The fog had lifted all of a sudden in the east wind, and the red glare of the burning ships disclosed a view of the rippling sea outside. There, in the full light of the conflagration, appeared five boats, pulling leisurely toward a man-of-war in the offing; and as they looked, the stranger was seen to let fall his courses, hitherto clewed up, and move slowly toward his boats, lying surprisingly close to the wind.

"Why don't they fire at him in those batteries?" cried Burton, angrily. "'Tis the Ranger herself, in full sight. Why don't they fire at her?"

He was answered in an unexpected manner. A corporal of marines came running down from one of the batteries nearest the port, and announced to the irate commander that all the guns had been *spiked*.

Before Burton could recover from the paroxysm of indignant astonishment produced by the news, a fresh ship caught fire; and his efforts were at once demanded to save it. The danger of an universal conflagration became so great that everybody had to go to work with a will dashing water on the flames with breathless haste.

And suddenly, in the midst of the racket and confusion of the shore, the heavy boom of a gun at sea added to the din; and the hum and whirr of a twelve pound shot was followed by the crash of splintering wood as the missile tore through the frail sides of one of the colliers, and scattered a shower of broken fragments over the crowd on the quay, besides burying itself in the bank of mud below.

The scattering of that crowd was immediate and unanimous. Every civilian without exception took to his heels and left the sailors, soldiers and marines to extinguish the fire alone. But out at sea they could plainly contemplate the Ranger taking in her boats; and as soon as the last one was in, up to the masthead ran a swallow-tailed commodore's pennant, and the Ranger wore round on her heel, and let fly her whole starboard broadside of nine twelve-pounders, gun

by gun, with the same precision as if at a target, into the devoted town as fast as the guns bore.

The effect was immediate and awful, for the houses went down where that terrible broadside struck like a pack of cards.

But the sailors and soldiers, with the heroic constancy of the profession that follows its duty in spite of danger, kept stubbornly on at their work on the blazing ships, and aided by the fact of the wind having changed, succeeded in extinguishing the last vessel, just as the last shot of the Ranger's broadside crashed into the bar-room of the "Culloden Arms."

As the darkness of night again covered the scene, the sailors gave a faint cheer, but the sensation was too much like that of relief from terror to admit of much triumph. In the heart of English waters, and almost in sight of three kingdoms at once, the daring commodore of the Ranger had given the prestige of Britannia a shock so rude that it never recovered from it.

As the daring corvette disappeared in the darkness, many a voice echoed:

"God deliver us from Paul Jones."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SAUCY KATE.

IN the gray of the next morning, fanned by a light breeze, a small skiff, with a single lug-sail of large size, was skimming over the smooth waters of Solway Firth toward the island of St. Mary's, within less than a league of shore; while a large vessel, no other than the redoubtable Ranger herself, was slowly forging through the water, her heavy hull only propelled by the motive power of top-sails and jib, the usual cruising canvas, she being about two miles from the shore.

In the stern of the skiff sat a grizzled old sailor, with a face like a nutmeg-grater, steering the boat; while a big burly naval officer, wrapped in a sea-cloak, was stretched in the bottom of the boat, apparently fast asleep.

The skiff was going at least six feet to the corvette's one in that light air, and was rapidly overhauling her, having the weathergauge as the light began to increase and the breeze to freshen.

"Do they see us yet, Tom?" muttered the recumbent officer in proof of his waking condition.

"I think not, sir," returned the sailor, never removing his eye from the distant Ranger. "We'll be in the glare of the sun when he do come up, and the Saucy Kate ain't wery large. We'll slip by fair and easy, as you'll see presently, sir."

"I hope so," said the recumbent one, gloomily. "If I was to get stopped on my way to St. Mary's 'twould be a hard job for me, Tom. Curse those lawyers with their papers. They've been trying to make trouble between me and my wife, Tom."

"Do'ee say so now?" said old Tom Hogg, an old sailor friend of Captain Burton's since the latter was a boy. "Well, these lawyers do beat all with their nasty deceivin' papers! Did yer honor chuck him into the sea to feed the fishes? 'Tis where they ought all to be, them lawyers."

"Ay, ay," said Burton, as coolly as if relating an ordinary event. "The men threw him in. Fancy the infernal, impudent scoundrel coming on my quarter-deck, and serving me with a complaint, or bill of divorce, or whatever they call it! I was savage enough to have shot him, if the men hadn't taken the matter into their own hands. But for all that, these law notices must be attended to, or they bring trouble."

"Ay, ay," said old Tom, sagaciously; "I knowed a man once as lost ten thousand pound a year, along o' them blasted law papers. Hope yer honor won't."

"I won't, if the devil helps his own," muttered the captain to himself, as he took off his cocked hat, and slowly raised his head to peer over the side of the boat at the distant Ranger. "But that accursed Paul Jones seems fated to be in my way whenever I'm in a hurry. It'll be like my luck if he sinks the hooker before I get to shore."

It seemed as if his words might easily come true.

The light, which was rapidly increasing now, had brought

land and sea into plain view at last. The bright glow of the sun, as it came nearer and nearer the horizon, had already tinged the clouds with gold, and the white canvas of the Ranger had almost caught the gleam.

The Saucy Kate was about half a mile to windward, hid in the glare of the almost risen morning, when, for the first time, those on board the Ranger gave tokens of noticing her.

The ship, which was slowly forging ahead on the starboard tack, the light breeze being barely sufficient to put the sails "to sleep," suddenly altered her course several points to the north, (wind N. E.,) let fall her fore and main courses, and set her light sprit-sails.

"He sees us, sure enough, yer honor," said old Tom, "but he'll have to walk uncommon lively to catch the Saucy Kate."

"Ay, ay," said Burton, while an anxious frown crossed his face, "but he may hit the boat, and then where are we?"

"In the hands of God Almighty," the old sailor remarked, gravely and simply.

Burton stared at him in silence.

In the age of vice and infidelity that preceded the French Revolution, unbelief was the prevailing fashion, from which the English officer was not exempt. Something in old Tom's manner, however, was so simple, earnest and thoroughly heartfelt, and the circumstances under which he spoke gave such a flavor of sincerity to the words, that Burton forbore the sneer that at any other time would have escaped his lips.

The Saucy Kate skimmed rapidly along as the sun rose up, and just as the king of day cleared the horizon, the flash of a gun through a white jet of smoke from the starboard bow of the Ranger, was followed by a shower of spray that drenched both occupants of the boat to the skin, as a round shot glanced off a wave and bounded over the mast of the Saucy Kate far to leeward.

"Crack on, if he blows you to flinders!" said Burton, as he rose up in the boat, without attempting further concealment. "Let the pirate know who he's chasing. He can't catch us now."

A pause of some two minutes was followed by a second gun; and the shot came if possible closer than the other.

Burton changed color slightly.

"By heavens!" he muttered. "Those fellows shoot like the Queen's Rifles. I shall have to bear up for the mainland, I believe."

Suddenly he changed his demeanor as the Ranger stood on, and it seemed about time to expect a third shot.

"Give me the helm, Tom," said the British officer, suddenly. "I'm a fool if I don't try his own trick on the Yankee rascal."

A third shot from the Ranger that grazed the end of the lug-sail yard, expedited his decision. The daring officer seized the tiller, jibed the Saucy Kate, and ran down before the wind straight for the sloop-of-war, as if about to yield to her menaces.

The Ranger stood on toward him without further firing; and the approach of the two vessels to each other was now exceedingly rapid. The Saucy Kate shot ahead like an arrow, the breeze freshening more every moment. It seemed hardly a minute from the time she jibed, before she was under the Ranger's quarter, passing her starboard battery at short pistol-shot.

But, instead of heaving to under the corvette's stern as was expected, the skiff flew past her without stopping and sped joyously before the breeze toward the west bank of the mouth of the Dee, about three miles off. There was no time to put for St. Mary's.

There was heard from the quarter-deck of the Ranger a violent cursing and swearing, as the commanding officer, whoever he was, realized the trick played on him.

Then the tacks and sheets of the corvette were started in a moment, and she flew round on her heel like a flash in pursuit of the Saucy Kate.

But the latter had obtained an advantage by the maneuver that made up in a great measure for the risk run.

The chase became a stern chase, off the wind, a proverbially hard one, and she only came under the port batteries of the Ranger, all unloaded as the guns were. Before the officer of the deck on that craft could see a gun cast loose

and pointed, the skiff was out of grape range, and gaining on the ship rapidly, with a short run to the safe refuge of the land.

At the moment when affairs stood thus the American commodore, for the first time, ascended on deck from his cabin.

CHAPTER XIII.

OFF AND ON.

THE commodore had but just been roused from sleep by the reports of the guns, the watching of the night before at Whitehaven having tired him out, and disposed him to snatch a few hours' repose. He found the first lieutenant swearing viciously at the Saucy Kate, and the Ranger following, with the wind on her port-quarter, while the watch were casting loose one of the bow guns for a chaser.

The rover cast a hasty glance at the skiff, and motioned to a midshipman standing near to hand him the glass. The boy gave the instrument to his commander, and the latter took a long, thirsty, exhaustive look at the boat. The skiff was leaving the Ranger fast, now, being crowded with all the sail she could bear, while the sloop-of-war was under short cruising canvas. When Jones put down the glass, he remained buried in gloomy thought for several minutes.

"Strange!" he murmured. "Is that man doomed to dog my steps and thwart me in every thing I undertake? What brings him here? Can he suspect? Is it possible he knows who I am? But he will follow me once too often, if—*Avast that gun!*"

He ended with a warning shout of command to the crew of the port bow chaser, who had just got their gun trained on the skiff, and were preparing to fire.

The first lieutenant, who was superintending the operation, started, and turned to recognize his commander. He raised his cap in salute, and came aft to report the events of the morning, since daylight.

He found the commodore still gazing thoughtfully at the skiff, fast increasing the distance, now.

"Shall we spread the light sails, sir?" he asked. "The ship can catch that hooker, easy enough, under her royals."

The commodore made no answer. He seemed to be pondering deeply, till the executive officer repeated his question. Then he started and looked all round him, seeming to recognize the vicinity with some alarm.

"Port—port! Hard a-port!" he suddenly cried to the helmsman; and the reason of the order was evident from the almost simultaneous hail of the look-out aloft:

"Breakers ahead! Breakers on the lee bow!"

"Tacks and sheets!" cried the commander, waking up to the danger, with all the latent energy of his nature. "Hard down with your helm, quartermaster—hard down! Haul taut on those braces! So—steady! Trim in the sheets!"

The obedient vessel, answering her helm with the precision of a beautiful machine, flew round in a graceful semicircle, and leaving the light skiff to pursue her way in safety to the sheltering shore, the ship stood off to the south-west, away from the dangerous vicinity of the breakers.

"After this, Mr. Lunt," said the commodore, in a grave tone, when the danger was fairly over, "let no more guns be fired without my orders, on any pretext. You forget where we are, sir, alone in the Irish channel, with enemies thick around us, within hearing of our guns. 'Twill need all the skill and caution we possess to run the gantlet of all the cruisers sent to intercept us, and to carry off the Earl of Selkirk in safety. These shots may alarm him now, and we shall have to calm his suspicions, if we hope to seize so important a hostage. Yonder skiff should never have got past us had I been on deck, but I would not have fired a gun. Why, sir, that English officer you saw in the boat served you the very same trick that I once served a frigate in which he was first lieutenant, when I commanded the little Providence. You should have had me roused as soon as you saw the skiff. Do so next time, no matter whether I am asleep or not."

And the commodore left the deck, after giving a few directions, and descended into the cabin, from which he had emerged, half-dressed, at the sound of the first chase-gun.

The American leader was not the only person who was awakened by the report of the guns.

Lady Flora Burton, whose bedroom windows commanded a view of the Firth, started from her slumbers in terror, and hurried to the window, whence she saw the whole animated panorama of the chase, the final submission of the Saucy Kate to the menacing summons of the corvette, and the ruse by which the little hooker made her escape, and shot by the island of St. Mary's toward the mainland.

But Lady Flora had no idea of whom the boat contained. Her unassisted eyesight only distinguished the outline of two figures in the skiff; and the Ranger seemed, to all outward appearance, an English corvette; for she hoisted the English ensign, and seemed to be only chasing some smuggler, a common occurrence in those seas.

When the Ranger hauled her wind, and stood out toward the distant coast of Ireland, Lady Flora sighed.

"I must have been mistaken, yesterday. It is impossible that he can be here now, when yonder swift cruiser is near, to pursue and annihilate him. And yet those guns yesterday, as of a battle—whence came they? And whence all these rumors of the dreaded Paul Jones? Is it possible that John Paul, the quiet and self-contained youth I remember so well, can have become the noted pirate and rebel, striving to kill the companions of his boyhood? Alas! what shall I do, if it is he, indeed?"

She dreamily watched the rapidly-lessening form of the Ranger, still shooting easily along on a bowline, and did not hear the tap at the door which announced the advent of Rosalie, till that discreet damsel had knocked three times; when her mistress bid her enter.

Rosalie cast a rapid glance out of the window at the distant ship, and her eyes lighted up with intelligence.

"Aha, miladi," she murmured to herself, as she knelt down to kindle the open wood fire, that the chilly spring morning rendered so grateful; "so the lover is coming, and *monsieur le mari* is away. Well, well, we shall see before long, if you have a right to sneer at Rosalie, with your haughty English airs. He pays well, this corsaire, and *monsieur le capitaine* is gone to sea without bidding me good-by, so I

shall kill two birds with one stone in helping Monsieur Pol Jean."

"Rosalie," said Lady Flora, who was again in bed, "have the people heard any thing more lately about the American rover, Paul Jones?"

"Non, miladi," said Rosalie. "They say that he was driven out to sea yesterday by that same English ship that we see out there; but no one knows for certain. *Helas!* I wish *monsieur le capitaine* was here. Then we should not be afraid of this miserable corsaire."

Lady Flora smiled faintly.

"I dare say you do," she observed. "For my part I would as soon see the pirate himself, as your beloved captain. As long as you stay with me, Rosalie, you will never see him again. The captain and I are separated for life now."

Rosalie was blowing at the feeble beginnings of the fire, and did not appear to hear her mistress. Nevertheless, she found breath to whisper to herself, in a low tone:

"*Sans doute*, miladi would rather see the pirate. But, if *monsieur le capitaine* has not much changed we shall see *him* before long. He is not the man to give up a quarter of a million livres of income, to please a jealous woman."

By this time the fire was going, and Rosalie proceeded to set out her lady's toilet articles in silence, without the usual flood of gossip with which she enlivened the operation of dressing.

Lady Flora rose, and took a seat in her easy-chair, with her face toward the sun, while her hair was being arranged; and was thus enabled to see the Ranger, which bowed along on the port tack till nearly hull down on the horizon, when she was seen to bear up, haul her wind, and come bowling along again toward St. Mary's, on the opposite tack.

Rosalie, from her station behind the lady, smiled triumphantly; and Lady Flora, as soon as it became plain that the Ranger was indeed approaching the land, once more concentrated her attention on the corvette.

The Ranger stood steadily on, till within half a mile of the beach, when she luffed up into the wind, fell off again on the port tack, backed her main-top-sail; and finally became almost stationary.

Then a boat dropped from her davits into the sea, followed by three more of various dimensions, and the little flotilla rowed leisurely toward the shore.

Lady Flora turned pale at the sight.

"Good heavens, Rosalie!" she cried, impulsively. "It must be Captain Burton coming to carry me off by force. What shall we do?"

"Be under no alarm, miladi," said Rosalie, quietly. "Yonder vessel is perhaps that of Monsieur Burton, but miladi has applied for a divorce."

And Rosalie smiled her evil smile.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTAIN BURTON'S DISCOVERIES.

THE boats of the Ranger were slowly approaching the shore from the seaward side, when the Saucy Kate, having hauled her wind, came dashing up on the other side of the island, and ran her slim bow up, high and dry, on the soft beach.

The English commander leaped hastily ashore, and turned round to Tom Hogg.

"Wait for me, Tom," he said. "I may stay here, and again I may have to leave in a hurry. I mistrust that piratical scoundrel is going to swoop down on the island, after booty, and I must be back at Carrickfergus by sunset."

"At Carrickfergus!" echoed the old sailor, astonished. "Why, your honor, 'tis eighty odd miles by sea."

"'Tis not twenty to the coast, by Stranraer," said Burton, rapidly. "A friend at Wigton will lend me a horse, and you must carry me to Wigton. Before twenty-four hours are over yonder vessel shall pay for the trick she played the Drake two days ago, and I'll hang the pirate to his own yard-arm. Good-by, Tom."

He strode up the steep bank that bordered the little island at this point, and climbed a low ridge that commanded a full view of the whole of St. Mary's.

The island comprised a space of some thirty or forty acres, and the extensive ramifications of the old abbey covered rather more than two of these. The garden on the south side, sheltered with walls and numerous box-hedges, lay smiling seaward in the light of the morning sun. The American boats were already close to the shore; and Burton, with instinctive caution, sunk down behind the shelter of the ridge, and ran to the rear of the abbey, before he showed himself. When he did, he made a rapid dash toward the back door, quite unnoticed, and speedily found himself within the shelter of the house.

Not a servant was to be seen at first. He heard a great gabbling of feminine voices at the front of the house, and came to the conclusion that they were engaged in watching the landing of the sailors, probably supposing them to be English.

"Good!" he muttered. "I'll defy them to find me in this old abbey. I wonder whether Selkirk's here? They may seize the old rascal as a hostage, if I don't warn him."

He passed rapidly down a long dark-corridor, and through a maze of similar passages, with all of which he was familiar, till he reached the door of the room usually occupied as a study and library by the Earl of Selkirk. He tried the lock. It yielded to his hand. He opened the door, and entered the room.

An old man, with long white hair, was sitting in a large easy-chair, reading a huge Bible by the aid of a pair of spectacles; but it was not the earl. Burton recognized, instead, the ancient gardener, John Paul, now grown very feeble and aged-looking, his health having broken down completely, since the morning in which his son had left the house in strife and disgrace. The earl had treated old John with great kindness, allowing him the free run of the library during his own absence from St. Mary's, and showing a wonderful consideration for the failing faculties of his faithful old servant.

Burton looked in; and when he saw old John, was about to retire. On second thoughts he advanced, and touched the old man.

"Where's the earl, John?" he asked.

Old John looked up in wonder.

"Eh! God be gude to us, captain, is it yersel' that's coom? Hech, but I'm blithe to see yer honor, lukin' sae bonny. Wull yer honor pardon auld Jock, that he didna' rise to receive ye, but me auld legs they grow unco steef now, and I canna be sae spry and souple as I was whiles ago. Hech! but yer honor's a sight for sair een."

"Tell me, John," said Burton, not unkindly, but impatiently; "where is the earl? Where's Lord Selkirk?"

"His lairdship's in Lunnon, cawptin," said old John, smiling at him in a helpless, imbecile sort of way, that told of the rapid decay of his mind. "I mind be hasna been near the auld place for two year noo, and I'm wearyin' to see him. Hech! cawptin, but my Leddy Flora's no lookin' sae hearty and sousy as I could wush, sir. Thae grand led-dies dinna wear sae well as puir bodies like us, cawptin. The Lord kens that the rich hae their trials as weel's the puir, sir."

Burton interrupted the old man here.

"Where is Lady Flora now?" he asked. "I've come all in a hurry to see her, and I fear there's danger coming to the house. The pirate Paul Jones is in the offing."

"Paul Jones! And wha's Paul Jones, cawptin?" asked John, fiercely. "Ye'll excuse me, sir, but 'tis unco like my ain name, and I ne'er heard tell o' him before. Belike yer honor kens him."

"Paul Jones is a murdering piratical ruffian," said Burton, fiercely, "whom I hope to meet in fair fight ere long. But where is Lady Flora? Tell me quick!"

"Belike she's in her ain chammer, cawptin, whaur his lairdship was wont to lee, when he was here. And she ha'e a flichterin' flyaway lassie wi' her, this time, they ca' Rosalie; and a body canna speer a question to the lassie, but she'll mak' sheep's een at ye, as ye were sparkin' her. Bat what's the matter, cawptin? Odds! but the mon's daft, that he flees away like that."

In fact, at that moment, Burton, who had approached one of the windows of the library, suddenly started back, without a word, slammed to and locked the door, from the corridor side, and vanished into the interior of the house.

The cause of his exit was simple enough. He saw the heads of a party of man-of-war's men coming up the gravel walk, and knew too well the danger of being captured away from his ship. It was the third time he had encountered enemies while out of the proper line of his duty, and the fatalit was ominous.

Yet it was characteristic of the dogged firmness of the man that he had resolved not leave the house till he had obtained the interview with Lady Flora for which he had braved a this danger. He knew every nook of the abbey, and hurried toward his wife's room, trusting to the enemy's ignorance of the locality to keep him hidden. But before he had gone many steps in the dark corridor, he nearly ran over a female hurrying in the opposite direction, who gave a low shriek of surprise, instantly checked, as she whispered:

"*Mon Dieu, capitaine, est ce toi ?* Is it thou?"

And Rosalie Duparcq clung trembling to him.

Burton was a man of infinite coolness and courage. He knew that the girl was devoted to him by the most reliable of ties—a guilty love—and his own selfishness took instant advantage of it.

"Listen, Rosalie," he said, in a rapid whisper; "do you know who is just now entering the house?"

"*Oui, capitaine,*" she answered, hurriedly. "'Tis the pirate Poljean, and he thinks I am his friend. He came to us in Brest, disguised as a sailor, bearing a letter for miladi from you, and he gave me a hundred livres to tell him all that passed between you. He sent me a letter yesterday, and another to miladi."

Burton listened intently to the girl's revelations. When she had finished, he caught her in his arms and hugged her fiercely, exclaiming:

"By heavens, Rosalie, your love is worth all the fine ladies in the land. Good girl! You have made a splendid spy. So she has been in correspondence with the rover? 'Tis plain that they must have met before. But if so, how and where?"

"Here in this house, capitaine," said she, quietly. "Did you never hear of that scandal, four years ago, when Lady Flora was going to elope with John Paul, the gardner's son?"

The earl bushed up the scandal finely, as he thought, when he married off his daughter; but we servants hear a great deal; and I have collected all the news I could for thee, my adored capitaine."

And Rosalie pressed closer to her lover.

But the effect of her news was different from what she had imagined. Captain Burton turned deadly pale, and his eyes glared like coals of fire, as he seized her arm and hissed out:

"Speak, girl—what do you mean? Has this Paul Jones seen my wife before? Who is he?"

"He is Jean Paul, the son of the old gardener here," said Rosalie, simply. "They tell me the earl found him one day in the garden, kissing Lady Flora, and that there was some scandal; *mon Dieu*, what of it? But milord turned out young Paul, and he went to sea and turned corsaire, and now he come back to carry off de lady."

Burton uttered a furious but stifled oath, as he listened. So intricate and illogical is the heart of man, that this one, habitually unfaithful, felt at the moment all the indignation of a wronged husband, when he heard the artful accusation of the girl.

"Where's my wife?" he demanded, hoarsely.

Rosalie pointed to the end of the corridor; and Burton strode toward the door, with clenched teeth, murder in his heart.

CHAPTER XV.

MATRIMONIAL FELICITY.

WITHIN the large, handsome breakfast-room, which lay at the end of the corridor, Lady Flora Burton, fully dressed with unusual care and splendor, was seated in an arm-chair facing the door by which Burton entered. By her side was the table, with the breakfast just spread, and in her lap lay the formidable yellow envelope which she had received from Mr. Taxley the day before.

On her husband's entrance she seemed to be quite devoid of surprise, for she retained her seat and welcomed him only with a cold bow.

Burton strode up close to her, having forgotten, in his fury at the news, the position of the household, and addressed her, sternly :

"So, my lady, I have found you in your best, ready to receive your lover, the gardener's son, now the rebel pirate Paul Jones! You would have a separation from me, would you to fly to *his* arms? No, no, my lady, not quite so fast. They do not annul marriages so easy, yet ; and sooner than see you with that pirate I'll run you through with my sword."

Lady Flora rose, with quiet dignity, and moved to the bell.

"I dressed to receive you, sir, having seen your boats coming ashore from your ship. I presumed that you had come with intent of violence, but I can assure you it is useless. You have been served with a copy of the bill of separation, I presume. You have my determination, therefore. I will never sleep under the same roof with you to the day of my death. You have outraged me long enough. Good-morning, Captain Burton."

She rang the bell, and waited silently for the response. Burton laughed derisively.

"Bah ! the trick's a stale one. As if you didn't know that your boats are those of the notorious pirate, Paul Jones."

Lady Flora started violently, and turned deadly pale.

"What !" she stammered. "Whose boats? Captain, as there is a God in heaven, I thought yonder vessel was the Drake, and your appearance confirmed the suspicion."

Burton laughed sneeringly.

"And perhaps you did not know that your old lover, John Paul, has become John Paul Jones, of the rebel navy? And perhaps he is not coming to see you to-day by appointment."

Lady Flora stiffened instantly into a rigid statue of angry disdain. She pointed imperiously to the door, saying in low tones :

"Go, sir. It is well seen I was right to apply to the courts for redress, when my husband dares to insult me thus."

Burton was about to answer when the door opened, and a

young officer, in the uniform of a naval lieutenant, entered the room. As soon as he saw Burton, he covered the commander with a pistol, saying:

"Captain, down with your arms! You're my prisoner!"

"I told you so, my lady," said Burton, bitterly. "Now you believe me."

Turning to the officer, he said:

"Where's your captain?"

"On board the ship," replied Mr. Wallingford, second lieutenant of the *Ranger*, for it was he, somewhat taken aback by the matter of course tone of the other. "Do you surrender, sir?"

"Of course," said Burton, coolly. "Do you suppose I'm an idiot? So captain Jones is aboard? You remember me, Mr. Wallingford, of course. You served my first lieutenant a scurvy trick at Carrickfergus the other day, but I forgive you on account of the civility you showed me on the passage from Brest."

Completely deceived by the apparent friendliness of the other, whom he recognized as having been lately a passenger in the *Ranger*, Mr. Wallingford uncocked and returned his pistol, observing.

"'Tis the fortune of war, Captain Burton. Excuse the formality, sir, but I must request your sword, and you must accompany me to the corvette. The men are searching the house now for the Earl of Selkirk, whom we came ashore to capture, but since the servants say he is absent, we must even be content with you."

Burton took off his sword, as if about to present to the other, and the lieutenant, a young, slender-framed man, advanced fearlessly to take it. Suddenly, like a flash, the Englishman whipt out the slight rapier he was holding, and plunged it deep in Wallingford's breast before the American suspected his intention.

The unfortunate youth gave a shout of mortal agony, and fell back dead. The weapon had split his heart.

Burton plucked it out with a savage laugh, and turned to his pale and shuddering wife.

"'Twould serve you right were I to kill *you* next," he said. "But I can afford to wait till I have hung *him*. Then tremble!"

He laughed again, stooped down and deliberately removed the heavy boarding-pistols from the dead officer's belt, wiped his bloody sword on the other's coat and sheathed it.

Then, just as the sound of steps was heard in the corridor, coming near the room, the English officer opened a secret door in the wall, of which the old abbey was full, and disappeared.

The whole thing had passed so quick, and Lady Flora was so much terrified and horror-stricken, that she did not seem able to move when the corridor entrance opened, and several sailors crowded in, with a midshipman at their head.

The boy saw the lady first, and addressed her respectfully:

"Madam, can you tell me where is the Earl of Selkirk—*my God! Mr. Wallingford's been killed!*" he added excitedly, as he suddenly caught sight of his officer's body covered with gore, and extended at Lady Flora's feet.

Instantly the men rushed forward with cries of grief and rage, for the dead lieutenant was a great favorite with the crew, from his kindness of heart.

"Who killed him?" "The cursed Britishers!" "*She* knows all about it!" "Let's burn the house and kill 'em all, to revenge Mr. Wallingford!"

Such were the various cries that saluted Lady Flora's ears as, totally ignorant of the proper course to pursue, she gazed in dumb terror at the threatening men around her.

The midshipman was the first to interpose his authority to protect her. The boy pulled one of the men by the arm, and cried:

"Avast there! don't you know any better than to threaten a lady? Stand back all of you! Jim Pearce, run down the gangway out there, and pass the word for Mr. Barney to come here. Tell him what's happened."

The sailor darted off to find the third lieutenant, while little Charley Peyton, the Virginian midshipman of the *Ranger*, addressed Lady Flora with a gravity beyond his years.

"Madam," he said, "here's our officer been killed, and we find him alone with you. How did it happen? Who killed him?"

The lady seemed to recover speech when she found that she was only questioned by a smooth-faced boy.

"Oh! my boy!" she burst out, "'twas cruel, treacherous, bloody! The poor young man suspected nothing; and the cruel Burton stabbed him while he jested with him."

"Who stabbed him?" echoed Charley.

The words were drowned by the reports of a volley of firearms outside, and the boy ran to the window. A number of sailors, pistol and cutlass in hand, were running to the west end of the abbey, evidently in pursuit of something.

"They've got him! That's the murderer!" cried the midshipman, wildly; and he, too, rushed outside, followed by the men, leaving the body of their officer alone with Lady Flora.

She heard the sound of shots at intervals for several minutes, also of shouts of anger and menace. Then they died away in the distance, and there was a pause. Lady Flora wrung her hands in perplexity, and remained irresolutely by the side of the corpse, till the renewed sound of approaching footsteps warned her of further trials.

A stern-looking officer, with a number of men, entered the room, and addressed her briefly and distantly.

"Madam, we understand that the person who killed our lieutenant is your husband, Captain Burton. He has just made his escape to the mainland in a boat, and the object of our search, the Earl of Selkirk, is absent. You will have, therefore, to accompany us to the ship as a hostage. Your maid can accompany you, and you shall not be insulted."

Turning to his men he gave some brief orders, which resulted in a general search of the whole house. Half an hour after Lady Flora and Rosalie, seated in the stern-sheets of the Ranger's barge, were being pulled over the sparkling billows to the Ranger.

A few minutes later, Lady Flora, almost doubting her senses, stood on the quarter-deck of the corvette, face to face with her old lover.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOO LATE.

THE officer in command of the boats had imagined that he was doing his duty when he carried off Lady Flora to the ship. He was somewhat surprised at the stern and angry aspect with which his captain turned to him, demanding :

"Mr. Barney, who authorized you to commit this outrage on a lady? What do you mean by transgressing your instructions in this way? I ordered you to search the abbey and capture the Earl of Selkirk. What have you done, sir? Report immediately."

Of Lady Flora, although she was standing by, he took no notice beyond a cold bow, until young Barney had reported.

The lieutenant was, and looked, mortified and indignant at his reception. In a few stiff and constrained words he recounted the landing, the march, the absence of Lord Selkirk and the sudden and mysterious murder of Mr. Wallingford. When the commodore heard the latter fact he was much moved, and when it further transpired who had been the assassin, and that he had made his escape to the mainland in the same boat that the Ringer had chased in the morning, the rover's face set itself into a grim and ominous look that few would have cared to face.

"Mr. Wallingford's body is in the jolly-boat, sir," concluded Barney; "and I thought best, since there was no other hostage at hand, to bring this lady along with us for your disposal."

The commodore made no answer for some moments. He appeared to be pondering deeply and gloomily. He turned away from Lady Flora with singular rudeness, and walked to the stern of the vessel, whence he cast a long and searching glance in all directions over land and sea.

"Fatality!" he muttered, in a low, dreamy tone. "I never sought this, and yet it has been forced upon me. The wo-

man I love is brought to me, and circumstances seem to have forced us together without our own volition. Is it the devil tempting me to wrong her? By heavens, he shall not prevail. I will send her back, and defy the Evil One. And yet, if she goes back, 'tis only to the power of that tyrant that has abused her. No, I will not do it. I must kill him first, before 'tis safe to trust her ashore, and kill him I shall this day. *I feel it.*"

He turned round and found the eyes of Lady Flora fixed on him with a look of insulted pride and wounded feeling that recalled him to himself. Also the basilisk orbs of Rosalie Duparcq were steadily eying him. He remembered that the lady had been standing since she entered the vessel, and that the merest courtesy demanded action on his part.

He assumed, as if by magic, the manners of a gentleman, and advanced to Lady Flora, saying:

"Madam, I ask your pardon for my seeming rudeness, but I was unwilling at first to detain you, and hoped to get over the difficulty of making you comfortable, by sending you ashore. As it is, I fear we must even trouble you to bear us company for awhile till we have taken some male hostage as influential as your father. Therefore, madam, allow me to welcome you to the American corvette Ranger, and to invite you to enter the cabin. Mr. Lunt, hoist in the boats, and make all sail for Carrickfergus. We'll give the Drake another brushing up."

He offered his arm to Lady Flora, and she took it in silence. Then, together, amid the ceremonious bows of the ship's officers, Paul Jones and Lady Flora Burton entered the cabin of the Ranger, under the raised quarter-deck, followed by Rosalie Duparcq.

As soon as they were gone, the lately silent vessel became alive with activity and bustle. The boats were hoisted in at the davits, and the topgallant-yards were sent up and crossed with the expedition and order of a crack man-of-war's crew. The Ranger filled her main-top-sail and slowly paid off in the increasing easterly breeze, while she laid her head to the south-west toward the Isle of Man, and spread topgallant-sails, royals, sky-sails and a cloud of studding-sails, under whose influence the beautiful craft careened over, till her gleaming cop-

per shone in the sun, and rushed through the water at the rate of twelve or thirteen knots an hour.

Meanwhile, in the cabin, the long-separated lovers, so strangely brought together at last, were alone with each other. The commodore, after ceremoniously handing Lady Flora to a seat, took Rosalie Duparcq by the arm, and led her to a trap-door in the floor of the cabin, which he flung open, and pointed to some steps, leading down into the hold.

"Go down there," he said, sternly. "I know your eaves-dropping ways, and I don't intend you shall practice them on me."

"But it is so dark, monsieur," she urged.

"It's the steward's pantry," replied the commander. "There's a lantern in the further corner. Keep near it, if you value your life, *for there's a spring-gun on the stairs.*"

Slowly and timidly Rosalie descended into the cavern, and Paul Jones shut down the trap-door. Then he came back to the door of the cabin, which he shut, saying to the sentry:

"Let no one pass in here till I call, unless an enemy's frigate heaves in sight."

He turned to Lady Flora then.

"Madam, we are alone at last. You received my letter?"

"I did, John," she answered, faintly. "Oh! what mad folly was it that induced you to write to me, *now?*"

"What do you mean?" he asked, slowly. "Have you forgotten the past?"

"I mean this, John," she replied, more steadily. "*It is too late.*"

"Too late!" repeated the lover, meaningly. "Too late, or too soon? You are chained to a tyrant. If I cut th chains with my sword, you will be free again, to love me as of yore."

"Not from *your* hand should the blow come that breaks those chains," said Lady Flora, sadly. "John, I did you a wrong in my giddy and thoughtless youth, which you, perhaps, have a right to revenge now. But you were not wont to be cruel, John. I remember—when we were children together—that you were always kind and merciful to all. Will you show less mercy to the woman you love?"

"What do you mean?" again asked the other, his dark face growing perceptibly paler as she spoke:

"I mean this, John," she answered. "Four years ago my father treated you very badly, and I was a weak, cowardly fool. But, John, right or wrong, I swore to love, honor, and obey another man then, and nothing can annul that vow."

"You are separated from him now," interrupted Jones, eagerly.

"I am," she answered, gravely; "but nothing can unmake him from what he is, nor me from what I am."

"His wife, I suppose you mean," said the sailor, between his teeth. "You are mistaken. Ere to-morrow morning you may be his widow."

"And what then?" asked Lady Flora, looking him steadily in the face.

From some cause or other the keen gaze of the commodore of the *Ranger* wavered and fell before the eyes of the lady. He hesitated a moment, and then appeared to be doggedly determined to speak out.

"Why, then," he said, sternly, "the vows you broke four years ago, when you wedded the wretch who has since made a hell of your life, might be kept to the man who has forgiven all the wrongs he has suffered for the sake of your love. Flora, we love each other. Years before that brute Burton ever saw you, I loved you and you loved me. Do you remember the token of our troth-plight? Behold it here still."

And he drew from his bosom the broken coin, that simple token of betrothal between lovers, so common in those days.

Lady Flora's bosom heaved violently, and the tears rushed to her eyes.

"For God's sake, John," she said, faintly, "tempt me no more. I love you, God knoweth it; but alas! alas! it is *too late*. I am a wife, and every word of love you address to me is a deadly sin. Spare me! You are a gentleman, and I am in your power. Be generous. Remember, I am not free, as I was when we last met. And *I am in your power*."

She had touched the right chord in the nature of the sailor. The appeal to his chivalry seemed to touch him to the quick. He bowed low.

"You shall be annoyed no more, madam," he said, gravely. "I wish it were in my power to put you ashore now, but I am sailing this moment in quest of your husband's vessel, the Drake, which I intend to capture before sunset, with good luck. Nay, you need not be alarmed. Your husband can not possibly be on board to fight his ship, so that you will be spared the necessity of considering me Captain Burton's murderer. His ship will be taken ere night, and if he is away so much the worse for him. I understand he was at the abbey this morning."

"He was ;" and Lady Flora, quite willing to talk on any other subject but the dreaded one of love, recounted the particulars of Wallingford's death and Burton's threat to hang the rebel.

Paul Jones ground his teeth hard as he heard it.

"We shall see," he muttered. "I fancy he'll find it a hard job." Then aloud : "As soon as we have finished with the Drake, I shall be happy to land you, Lady Flora. Till then, I bid you farewell."

He bowed and left the cabin.

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING UNDER WAY.

MR. GREY, first lieutenant of H. M. S. Drake, was anxiously pacing the quarter-deck, gazing alternately seaward and ashore. He was evidently in a very disagreeable frame of mind, and undecided what to do.

Mr. Vernon, the third lieutenant, was on the opposite side of the quarter-deck, watching the operations of several mid-dies, gravely engaged in taking the sun's meridian altitude, according to navy regulations, for their due instruction in the science of navigation.

"I say, Vernon," quoth Grey, suddenly, "what sort of a fellow do you think our skipper is, to go gallivanting off ashore, when Paul Jones may be within sight of the cliffs, for all we know?"

Vernon laughed carelessly.

"None of my business, Grey. Thank Heaven, there's no responsibility on my shoulders. The old barky looks as well as ever since her mauling the other night, and I'd just as soon fight without the skipper as with him. That Paul Jones has about run the length of his tether, I think."

"Ay, ay," said Grey, resignedly; "but you wouldn't feel so easy if you were in my place. Since that smuggler came in this morning with the news of the rascal's descent on Whitehaven, I've been thinking I'm in a bad position. The captain left orders not to stir from this berth till he came back; and suppose the pirate heaves in sight, what am I to do? If I go out, I disobey orders. If I stay in, I neglect my duty. It's a bad box, Vernon."

"I don't know," returned the subaltern, carelessly. "We couldn't be blamed if we took Paul Jones, without the skipper. 'Twould be an awkward dispatch for him to write, to be sure, if he wasn't aboard, but—"

"*Sail ho! broad nor'-east!*"

The well-known cry of the look-out from the cross-trees interrupted the colloquy, and Grey started and returned the hail.

"What about her? What sort of a looking craft?"

"Pilot-boat with two lugs, coming down wing and wing, sir," was the reply. "She's heading straight for here, sir."

Mr. Grey seized his glass and ran up the weather-rigging without a word. When he reached the cross-trees, a beautiful panorama burst on his sight. The height of the mast exceeded that of the land near by, and the Irish Channel, with its sparkling, tossing waves, was in full view to the opposite coast of Scotland, while the rocky promontory known as the Mull of Galloway rose blue on the distant horizon.

As the look-out had said, one of the long, swift boats, used alternately for rowing and sailing by pilot and smuggler alike, was bearing down on the Drake, within some four miles, at race-horse speed.

"There's two more sails, sir, yonder and yonder," said the look-out to his officer, as Mr. Grey steadied himself to take a look.

At the same time the man indicated with his finger a little

white speck on the eastern board, and the canvas of a large ship on the starboard tack, coming the coast from the south.

Mr. Grey directed his telescope on all three objects in succession, examining each with great care. When he had finished, he shut up the glass, handed it to the look-out, and observed :

"Bring that down to me when you're relieved, Brown. The captain's in sight."

Without waiting for the tedious process of descending the shrouds, the active officer caught hold of one of the royal backstays, and came sliding down on deck like a flash.

In a moment more he was on the quarter-deck, trumpet in hand.

"Pipe all hands to quarters," he said, hurriedly, to the boatswain, and then turning to Vernon, as the shrill whistle resounded through the ship, he said, in a low voice :

"Fun's coming, Jack. The barge is coming back from Whitehaven under her lug-sails, the skipper's aboard of the pilot-boat in full fig, as he went out, and, by Gad, sir, *Paul Jones is in the offing*, coming on a bowline straight for the Drake."

And Mr. Grey slapped his hand on Vernon's shoulder with an enthusiasm of relief that told of his late anxieties having disappeared.

When the men came tumbling up the hatches, the Drake was quickly put into condition for sea. Her sails were already bent, and the topgallant-yards did not take many minutes to cross, with such a powerful crew as the sloop-of-war possessed.

The traces of the mauling received by the Drake two nights before had entirely disappeared under the care of her officers. Grape and canister does not make such large holes as round shot, and all damages had been speedily repaired, patched up, or painted over, till the ship looked as trim as ever.

Half an hour, actively employed, worked wonders now. At the end of that time, topgallant-yards across, the sloop-of-war Drake was short over her anchor, her men at quarters ready for action, sail-trimmers at their stations, ready to loose and drop at a moment's notice.

Then Grey hailed once more :

"Mast-head, there ! What are they doing ?"

"Pilot boat has joined the other boat, sir. 'Tis our own barge ; and the captain's aboard now, sir. Here he comes round the headland, sir."

"What about the stranger ? Where's she ?" inquired Grey.

The look-out hesitated a moment while he examined, ere he answered :

"Stranger shows English colors, sir, a large sloop-of-war, within a league of the shore now."

As he spoke a large man-of-war's boat, under two lug-sails and pulling sixteen oars, dashed round the projecting cape that had hitherto hidden it, and came foaming up the bay before the stiff breeze that blew from the eastward.

There was no mistake about its identity. It was the captain's barge of the Drake, in which he had left for Whitehaven the day before, and which had returned therefrom just in season to catch the pilot boat in which he had come from Scotland.

And Captain Septimus Burton himself it was, who, shortly after, grasped the side-lines, and came on board amid the cheers of the ship's company. Burton acknowledged the salute of men and officers by lifting his cap, and then turned to Grey :

"You have done well, Mr. Grey. The ship looks well, sir, and able to do the work before us. Out in the offing lies the pirate Paul Jones. He has the weather-gage of us, but he can't get out of the channel without passing our batteries. Before the sun sets, sir, we'll bang the pirate to his own yard-arm. Trip the anchor and make sail, sir."

Mr. Grey and all the officers touched their caps, the captain touched his own in answer, and disappeared into his cabin, where he made a hasty renovation of his person, somewhat weary from the loss of a night's sleep and his long ride.

While he was dressing, the first lieutenant hove up the anchor, got sail on the ship with wonderful expedition, and began to work out of the open roads in the teeth of the strong breeze that was blowing. The operation was necessarily a very long and tedious one, as, to add to their difficulties, the tide was setting in and running very strong.

Burton had ample time to shave his stubby beard off, and equip himself in his best and newest uniform at his leisure, before the Drake had fairly extricated herself from between the two capes at the mouth of the Lough and came in sight of the stranger.

Then he came on deck, and at the first glance it became evident that the intentions of the other ship were decidedly hostile.

The Ranger it was, beyond a doubt, her lofty and slightly raking masts nearly naked, as she lay to in the offing, quite stationary, under three close-reefed top-sails, foretopmast stay-sail, spanker and jib, with the then almost unknown stars and stripes fluttering proudly at the gaff, while the blue pennant, broad and swallow-tailed, that indicated her commander to be a commodore, waved from beneath the main-truck.

The Ranger it was, waiting for them to come up to her in a good offing, for as soon as the Drake hove in sight, the American corvette fired a gun to windward, and filling her main-top-sail stood off to the northward right across the track of the English ship.

"Confound the scoundrel's impudence!" observed Mr. Grey, indignantly. "What does he mean by wearing a commodore's pennant on a sloop?"

"He used to command a squadron on the Yankee coast," said Burton. "I must admit that he handled his vessels, the Alfred especially, a leaky old tub, better than any one else on that coast. But if I don't cut his comb to-day, it will be because I've lost all the luck I ever had. Send up the royals, Mr. Grey. We won't close before night at this rate."

In a very few minutes from that time royals and studding-gails were got on the corvette, and she staggered along at an increased pace out from the land, beating up in short tacks toward the Ranger, and making a good offing in the course of some three hours. The American corvette continued beating to windward, but very much slower and under short canvas, frequently lying to, to wait for the Drake.

At last, within an hour of sunset, both ships being five good miles from land, Paul Jones lay to, the Drake sent down all her light sails and reduced herself to the same canvas as her antagonist, when the two gladiators of the sea ap-

proached within pistol-shot, and Burton hailed through the trumpet :

“ Ship ahoy ! What ship’s that ? ”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GRUDGE SETTLED.

THE main-top-sail of the Ranger filled, as the English captain hailed, and the vessel paid off to the gale, on the same tack as the Drake and a little to windward and ahead.

The commodore of the Ranger, in full uniform, his dark, peculiar face surmounted by a heavily-laced three-cornered hat, sprung on one of the quarter-deck guns of the corvette, and pointed with his sword to the flag at the gaff.

“ This is the American ship Ranger,” he answered, with a sarcastic smile ; “ and if you want further information, please come and take it. *Up with your helm, quartermaster !* ”

The last words were spoken quick and sharp, and the bows of the Ranger swept round in a grand curve to the north-west across the bows of the Drake, with the evident intention of raking.

But Burton was too old a sailor to be caught tripping.

“ Helm a-weather ! ” he shouted instantly, and the bows of Drake followed those of the Ranger as if impelled by the same helm, the English ship being thus brought on the inner arc of the circle.

As the two vessels swept round alongside, the bow guns of the Ranger opened, one by one, every shot crashing into the hull of the Drake, tearing through her bulwarks and sweeping her decks.

The English vessel returned the fire instantly, with different effect. Her guns were sighted too high ; and an unlucky wave lifting her, as she delivered her broadside, many of the shots whistled harmlessly over the bulwarks of the Ranger, cutting loose shrouds and blocks and completely demolishing one of the quarter-boats on the davits, but leaving hull and masts alike uninjured.

At the end of the two broadsides both vessels were running free, with the wind on the larboard quarter, the Ranger abeam of the English ship, and slowly forereaching from her superior speed.

For twenty minutes or more the two ships ran alongside, under the short canvas each had assumed, firing into each other at short range. The firing of the Ranger produced very little apparent effect on the Drake, while the sails of the American corvette were speedily full of shot-holes, and dangling ropes and flying splinters gave token that her spars and rigging were suffering heavily.

On the other hand, at every broadside of the Ranger, shrieks and cries were heard from the Englishman's decks, proving the frequency of the shots *that hulled him*.

The dark, grim-looking commodore kept pacing his deck along the line of the guns, saying little except to caution a gun-captain now and then to "Fire low, sir. Aim at her water-line, and *don't fire too fast*." The men of the Ranger imitated their commander's demeanor and fought silently and grimly, aiming with great deliberation.

The fire of the Drake was infinitely more rapid than that of her antagonist. Burton could be seen on his quarter-deck, encouraging his men, and his stentorian voice, in the intervals of the fire, could be heard shouting:

"Give it to them, hearts of oak! Blow the Yankee pirate out of water!"

Suddenly the Ranger, which had forereached on the other till her port-quarter was abeam of the Drake's main-channels, yawed widely to port, and swept across the English corvette's head, pouring a simultaneous and murderous broadside into her starboard bow that raked her whole low tier of guns with fearful effect, dismounting three at one swoop, and killing and wounding a score of stout sailors in an instant.

The effect of a raking, or nearly raking, fire of this sort on a ship-of-war is of a kind that needs to be seen to be appreciated. Unable to return a shot while thus taken at advantage, the Drake resembled, for the moment, a prize-fighter "in chancery." The punishment she received in a single minute was fearful.

Mr. Grey, standing on the quarter-deck, was cut almost in

half by a cannon-ball, and his mangled body knocked against his commander with a force sufficient to send all the breath out of him.

Unable to speak, Burton could only make frantic signs to the helmsman to put his tiller a-port, while the Drake swept round clumsily, with the wind on her other quarter, bringing her hitherto unused port-guns to bear on the Ranger.

The new broadside of the English corvette was the best aimed that had yet been delivered from their party. The Ranger was hulled in four places, one of the shots killing two men at the same gun, and dismounting the gun, while the maintop-sail yard slings, parting to another ball, let the yard down on the cap, already wounded in several places, and brought the maintopmast crashing down over the side in a mass of wreck.

The crew of the Drake gave three cheers, which were hardly out of their mouths when the stern voice of the American commander was heard shouting:

"Axmen away, to clear wreck! Work lively, lads! We've not begun to fight yet. Cut away those backstays, and let her drop. Up helm, and give him the other broadside."

And trusting to the empty guns of the Drake's port broadside to save him from raking during the evolution, the commander of the Ranger wore round handsomely, bringing his own starboard broadside to bear on the Drake, and firing rapidly, even while the men on the other side of the ship were clearing away the wreck.

Then the action recommenced between the two corvettes, with a ferocity to which the other seemed child's play.

The guns of the Ranger were no longer fired singly. The dark leader pointed every one himself, and delivered them in salvos of a whole broadside at a time, aimed at the hull of the Englishman.

Burton was heard at intervals encouraging his men, till the Ranger had cleared herself of the lost topmast and was free to manœuver again.

Then the American boldly put his helm up once more, and pointing his bow to that of the English vessel, ran her down and threw his grappling-irons, his jib-boom crossing that of the Drake and fouling.

"One last broadside, and we have him," cried the clear stern tones of the American leader, as he stood in the mizzen rigging waving his sword.

Burton was seen to spring on the quarter-rail of the Drake at the same moment, shaking his blade savagely at the commodore. Then came a simultaneous explosion of the whole broadside of the Ranger, followed by the splintering of wood, shrieks and groans; and lastly the high, clear voice of Paul Jones, shouting:

"Boarders away!"

The English captain, struck with a grape-shot in the breast, reeled back and fell on the quarter-deck in a pool of blood as the crew of the Ranger, uttering a tremendous yell, boarded over the entangled bow-sprits in a mass of glittering weapons.

But the resistance of the Drake was but feeble at the last. Those seemingly harmless broadsides, that left her spars unscathed, had told fearfully on hull and crew.

Already her deck looked like a shambles, fully a third of her crew being dead or wounded, while the Americans had only lost eight all told; and the combat that ensued on the Englishman's forecastle was over in five minutes, the survivors of the Drake fleeing below hatches, while Paul Jones with his own hands hauled down the English ensign, and setting his foot on it, waved his sword, crying:

"Now, my lads, three cheers for the Continental Congress and the Ranger!"

They were given with the fierce exultation of victory, and the leader, turning round, met the eyes of Captain Burton, dull and sunken, but gleaming with hate, as he whispered:

"Curses on you forever, rebel! Kill me if you like, for I'll never surrender to you."

And the English leader fell back fainting in his own blood, from where he had half-risen on his elbow.

CHAPTER XIX.

A CONFESSION.

UNDER the active superintendence of Barney and Lunt, a spare maintopmast was fitted to the Ranger; and the setting sun shone on a scene of the greatest bustle and activity. There was but little wind now, and the small pilot-boats and yachts, that had come out to see the defeat of the "rebel privateer," were scattering in all directions with commendable prudence.

As the twilight crept on, the buzz of labor increased, and the English prisoners, disarmed and under guard, were set to work to help repair damages. Hour after hour passed, and still the labor went on. Inside of midnight, if a stranger had caught sight of the two stately vessels, standing toward the south-east under a pile of canvas from deck to truck, he would never have dreamed that they had fought at sunset.

And both ships were sailing together, back to the south-east, toward the very place whence they had come in the morning, for Paul Jones had promised Lady Flora that she should be set ashore at St. Mary's, and he was a man of his word.

Down in the cabin of the Ranger that night a solemn scene was enacting.

Lady Flora Burton, who had been kept in safety during the fight, down in the run of the corvette, was now seated by the head of a cot, on which lay the dying form of her once tyrant husband. Rosalie Duparcq, weeping bitterly, sat, some distance off, in the corner of the saloon; and the surgeon of the Drake stood at the foot of the bed, watching the flickering flame of life of the defeated commander. Burton was apparently asleep, and Lady Flora watched him in silence.

The surgeon presently beckoned her away to the door, and spoke to her in a low voice. Dr. Mallet was a discreet man, and asked no questions about the singularity of Lady Flora's position. He was only intent on his duty as he whispered:

"Madam, I can do no good here, and my services are needed elsewhere, to help those who need help. It is my duty to tell you that the captain can not survive more than an hour or two. If there are any matters to be settled between you, let them be done, for I am of no more use. Good-night."

He bowed, and was gone. Lady Flora returned to the couch of the dying captain, leaned her head on her hands, and wept softly, forgetting at that moment every thing but the fact that he was her husband.

Presently she heard a rustle in the bed, and looking round, beheld the eyes of Burton fixed on her own, with a wistful, inquiring gaze.

"What are you crying for, Flora?" he asked, in a low husky tone.

"Oh, Burton, can you ask? My dear, I have been a bad wife to you, and I wish I could make amends," was her sad answer.

Burton's eyes gleamed for a moment with a strange light.

"It is true then what Rosalie said. You have been unfaithful to me, and your father deceived me. This Paul Jones is your lover?"

Lady Flora rose to her feet.

"Burton," she said, solemnly, "you are dying, and we are both in God's presence. As he hears us, I swear to you that I have never broken my marriage-vow. More, that neither before nor since our marriage, four years ago, has any association existed between me and the person you speak of. I will not deceive you. I was once betrothed to John Paul, and we pledged our faith to each other. My father separated us, and compelled me to marry you. From that day till the day I was forcibly carried off by the crew of this vessel, I never saw John Paul again. Yesterday I did. I appealed to his honor to release me, and, Burton, the man whom I broke faith with to marry you, is at this moment sailing back to St. Mary's, running into terrible danger, to restore me to the home from which I was taken, against his orders, by no fault of his."

When she had finished, Burton lay silent for some minutes. Then he called out, in his faint, husky voice:

"Rosalie, come here."

The French girl hurried up, weeping. After all, there was some good in Rosalie. She really and truly loved the handsome captain.

"Rosalie," said Burton, slowly, "I am dying. As you fear God, tell me, is there any truth in what you told me about this Paul Jones and my wife?"

Rosalie hesitated. Her desire for revenge, and her spite at her mistress, struggled hard to make her persist in the falsehood; and yet the solemnity of the appeal frightened her.

"Speak, girl!" said the dying captain, slowly; "but remember that *if you lie to me, I will haunt you, forever and ever.*"

Rosalie shuddered with fear at the threat.

"'Twas false," she gasped. "Miladi sneered at me, because I loved thee, my captain, and I hated her to the death."

And Rosalie fell on her knees at the bedside, and hid her face in a storm of sobs. Burton smiled faintly and stroked her head.

"It was my fault, child," he whispered. "Flora, forgive us. Thou hast been an angel, and I a monster, all our wedded life. Never let any one you love marry for convenience, if you can. See what it has brought us to."

"Oh, Burton," said his wife, sadly, "'tis not for me to complain. You were deceived at our marriage, and I have been punished for ill-faith. — Let the past be past."

"And fair-play in future," said the dying officer, with a faint smile. "Flora, open the door and call the sentry."

Somewhat surprised the lady obeyed; and the sentry, a stiff, stern-looking marine, looked in.

"Sentry," said Burton, in a low tone, "pass the word for the corporal of the guard or some one to take a message for me."

The sentry saluted and disappeared. In a few minutes the corporal stood bolt upright by the bedside, his hand at his cap.

"Corporal," said the captain, in a very low, faint voice, "give the compliments of Captain Burton of the Royal Navy to Commodore Jones, and beg him to do the favor of visit *me.*"

The corporal, with a bow, faced round and marched out while Burton lay back, seemingly exhausted by the effort, and whispered :

"Thou'lt not be troubled long with thy naughty Burton, Flora. I feel the end coming fast now."

Lady Flora took his clammy hand in hers, and tried to speak, but the tears choked her. The dying man's repentant words completely unnerved her. Burton touched Rosalie on the shoulder and silently pointed to a chair some distance off. The girl started as if he had struck her, and flushed scarlet. Then her head fell on her bosom, and quietly and humbly she retired to the indicated spot, where she wept in silence.

There was a short pause, during which Burton seemed to be trying to collect his faculties, and then the slow step of the commander of the Ranger was heard descending the companion-ladder.

Burton hastily released his wife's hand, and motioned her to a seat at the head of the bed. That little action spoke more for the delicacy of tact induced in a naturally coarse nature by the habits of good society, than any thing else.

He would not offend an unfortunate rival by affected fondness.

Then the door opened and the American leader entered the cabin.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

PAUL JONES removed his hat and advanced slowly to the side of the cot. A strange expression of gloom and pain was upon his face, very different from the deportment of a victor. He seemed to be sternly repressing some inward struggle, that paled his dark cheek, and compressed his iron lips as in a vise.

He remained standing, gazing on the other, in perfect silence, never noticing Lady Flora.

Burton was the first to speak, and he seemed to be much stronger than before, as he said in a low but clear voice :

"Commodore Jones, I owe you an apology. You treated me once with a chivalry and generosity that few men would have shown, and I have repaid you with hatred and suspicion. Till within a few minutes, I was not aware how much I had wronged you, unwittingly. But, sir, for the wrong I did John Paul, I am not responsible. I knew nothing of my wife's former life. Since then I have been a bad husband, but I am about to make reparation for that by leaving her free. Sir, for the unworthy suspicions I have entertained of you and my wife's honor, I crave your pardon."

The generous American bowed low. His countenance relaxed ; and he said, in a broken voice :

"Sir, do not mention it. I, too, have committed wrongs to be forgiven. Say no more, I beseech you."

And he frankly grasped the proffered hand of his dying foe.

Burton smiled, and resumed, in a fainter tone :

"I thank you, sir. I have one further favor to ask of you. I am told that you are running back into danger to-night, from excess of chivalry to Lady Flora. Sir, tell me on your honor. If she was not on board would you be steering south-east?"

"I should not," said the other, gravely. "As a sailor you know it."

"Then in God's name, commodore, wear round and head for the open Atlantic. The channels are swarming with cruisers looking for you, and your only way to escape is past the Giant's Causeway and Malin Head."

"You forget, captain, said the American, "that my word is pledged to restore Lady Flora to St. Mary's unharmed."

"Lady Flora can release you from that promise," said Burton ; "and she will. Commodore Jones, as a mark of respect for your bravery and conduct, *I intrust my widow to your care, with the request that she will marry you as soon as her term of mourning shall have expired.*"

Had a bomb-shell fallen in the cabin, the effect could not have been greater than was produced by the strange proposal of the rough sailor.

Lady Flora flushed crimson, started up, exclaiming :

" Burton, Burton, how can you talk so ! " and fairly fled into a side state-room ; while Paul Jones gazed doubtingly at the other as if he thought him delirious. Burton smiled.

" I do a thing well, when I do it," he said, faintly. " Good-by, Jones, old fellow. You licked us fairly, and I forgive you. Poor Flora's a good girl, but she was always so infernally jealous. I don't see what she ran away for, then ; but women always were puzzles, except bad ones."

He sunk back, completely exhausted, and asked faintly for water. It was brought to him by the hand of his late foe.

He drank eagerly and then became quite silent for awhile, but his breathing began to grow more and more laborious, and it became clear that his end was approaching.

Paul Jones stepped quietly to the state-room in which Lady Flora had disappeared.

" Madam," he said, in a low tone, " the end approaches. I will send the chaplain to you. His office is the only one that entitles him to interpose at such a time. Farewell."

He passed by the cot of the fast-sinking officer, and left the cabin without another word.

Ten minutes afterward the chaplain was praying fervently by the side of a corpse.

Lady Flora, in tears, was on her knees by her erring husband's body, joining earnestly in the petition for mercy to his soul.

Rosalie Duparcq was rocking to and fro in the corner in silent grief.

Paul Jones paced the quarter-deck above in the still moonlight, watching the dark outline of the Mull of Galloway, standing grimly on his course for St. Mary's, unmindful of danger.

Lady Flora had failed to release him from his promise, and he was determined to keep it, at any hazard.

CHAPTER XXI.

A PROMISE KEPT.

OLD John Paul sat in his easy-chair by the library table at St. Mary's, reading his Bible. The old man's appearance was decidedly changed for the worse, since the descent on St. Mary's by the boats of the Ranger. The servants and himself had been unmolested, it is true, but the carrying off of Lady Flora had demoralized the whole household. Some had fled in dismay; others were hesitating what to do, and laying hands on every thing valuable in the house, preparatory to their own departure. To old John, brought up in the earl's family, it seemed as if the end of the world had come, when he saw his patron's household invaded by a crowd of strange men, and learned that an enemy had dared to insult the sacred shores of His Blessed Majesty King George.

The poor old man was dreadfully shaken in mind and body, and he sat reading his Bible desperately, as if he fancied in it some protection from the untold evils that brooded in the air. He had heard all the terrible tales of Paul Jones that were flying about the coast, and since the descent on the abbey he had gathered all the news on that score with hungry avidity. But since none of the abbey servants had seen the dreaded rover, and since the stories of his personal appearance were so contradictory, it is not wonderful that old John failed to connect them with the person of his lost son.

Since the day that young Paul had been driven from St. Mary's, his father had refused to hear any thing of his fate. Once when a letter in his son's handwriting arrived, post-marked from the colonies, before the rebellion of '76, the old man was reluctantly persuaded to open it, when he was about to burn it unread.

That letter informed him that his son had quitted the sea and taken to farming in Virginia. Old John had written back a curt reply to his son's request to him to join him, that he "could na be fashed to leave the gude Laird that had treated

him sae well all his life, to trust his auld banes to an insolent brat that bit the hand that fed him."

Such was the influence of clannish loyalty on the father as to close his heart against his own son, for presuming to make love to an earl's daughter. But, since that day, in the long silence that had followed the repulse, John had more than once found himself bewailing his own loneliness, and thinking kindly of his absent son. The reading of several old-fashioned love stories in the earl's library had slowly induced in old John a sense of excusability in the other, and he was on the road to forgiveness and reconciliation, when the news of the terrible Yankee pirate, Paul Jones, threw him quite off his balance again.

On the morning of the day after the action of the Drake and Ranger, then, he was eagerly muttering over the parable of the Prodigal Son, when one of the servants came running in eagerly, crying:

John, John, my lady's coming back in a boat, and there's two great ships on the sea, that the people say has sunk the pirate Paul Jones, and brought my lady back. Run, run, and let's welcome her."

Old John was so taken aback by the news, that he could only say:

"Eh! God save us, lassie, whaur are ye ganging?" when out dashed the delighted girl into the garden, and he heard screams of joy, and the trampling of many feet on the gravel walk outside.

Slowly the meaning of her words dawned on the old man's mind. He rose, took hat and staff, and hobbled to the door, and thence out in the garden and down to the shore. When he got there, a group of all the remaining servants was on the beach, and a large man-of-war's boat was coming to shore, flying an English flag in the bow.

The boat dashed up on the beach, the men shipped their oars and jumped out, and old John beheld them lift carefully out, on dry land, two ladies, one of them his mistress, Lady Flora, the other the French maid, Mademoiselle Rosalie Duparcq.

Then a third figure, that of a small, slender-framed gentleman, of dark complexion, stepped ashore, and advanced toward

John. The stranger wore a magnificent gold-laced uniform, and on his breast glittered a large diamond cross, suspended by a crimson ribbon, the order of the French St. Louis.

Old John Paul, almost doubting his eyes, recognized in the other his long-lost son, and falling on his neck, exclaimed :

"Oh, my bairn, my bairn, ha'e thae made ye a captain? Bless the gude Lord that sends me the sight o' ye afore I dee! Eh, Jock, mon, but ye look brawly! And 'twas yer ain ship that took the rebel pirate Paul Jones, they tell me. Laddie, laddie, I forgi'e ye a'!"

A strange struggle of emotions seemed to take place in the sailor's breast, as he listened to his father.

Turning to Lady Flora, he said :

"Madam, I have kept my word. You are free. Henceforth we meet no more, *save at your wish.*"

Something seemed to choke Lady Flora, as she replied, in a low voice :

"As you please, Captain Jones. You are, indeed, *a man of your word!*"

In her last words there seemed to lurk a certain latent sarcasm, for the commodore looked keenly and doubtfully at her, forgetting, for the moment, his father's presence.

"Would you rather I had not come, Lady Flora?" he asked, coldly. "You might have released me from my promise, but you did not. Now, the danger is incurred, and it is too late. Farewell!"

"Farewell!" she echoed. "And your father, can you not speak to him?"

"My father will come with me, henceforth," said the rover, slowly; "unless, madam, *you wish me to return for him, later.*"

Lady Flora played with the fringe of her shawl in silence, a moment. Then she looked up, with a faint smile, saying :

"'Tould be a pity to expose so aged and broken a man to the hazards of a sea-fight, would it not? I know I was frightened to death yesterday. And you will probably encounter enemies on your road to Brest. Is it not so?"

"I probably shall," he answered, gravely.

"Then why not leave him with me *for a year!*" she asked, meaningly.

"Because, madam, my father must be treated *as my father*," he said; proudly, pressing his arm round the neck of the wondering old man, who did not seem to understand a word of this enigmatical colloquy.

Lady Flora passed her own arm around his neck on the other side, with a deep blush, as she bravely said:

"John nursed me many a time when I was a child; and I promise, before Heaven and man, to treat him as if he were my own father, until you return to claim—"

She faltered a moment, and then added, in a tone audible only to the commander of the Ranger:

"To claim both, John."

The commodore bowed low and gravely.

"I will claim the promise in one year, madam," he said. "But bethink you of woman's weakness and of the past. If I am deceived *again*, 'twill be *for the last time*."

He turned to his father and embraced him affectionately.

"Father," he said, "you know an officer of the navy has to obey orders. I have not even time to speak to you, for I must away on the service of—to which I am commissioned. I shall return to see you in one year from now, and Lady Flora has promised to take good care of you till I return. Will you stay with her?"

"Whaur else wa'd I stay, laddie?" said old John, wonderingly. "Sae ye're ganging awa' ance mair, to pleugh the an-chean on his majesty's sairvice? Ye maun e'en gang, then. I mind how Captain Burton was aye the same, never kenning whaur he'd rest his head ilka nicht, wi' his orders. Is yon his ship, then?"

"Well, well, father," interrupted the rover, quickly, "I must say good-by to you. Keep up a good heart till I return next year."

"God bless ye, laddie," said the old man, innocently, and he kissed his son on both cheeks.

Then the commodore advanced to Lady Flora, and stooping low, with uncovered head, he gravely kissed her hand.

"Farewell, madam," he said. "As you are true, God deal with you."

"Amen!" she replied, solemnly.

Then the rover made a sign to his men, and they launched

the boat in the surf once more, leaped in, and took their places.

The commander jumped actively on board, the oars flashed in the sunlight, and away went the barge toward the Ranger.

The group on shore watched it until it reached the side of the ship, and then saw the tackles hooked on, and the boat hoisted in.

The Ranger was lying to, in shore, the Drake standing off and on about a mile outside. As the boat was hoisted in, the Drake fired a gun, and several flags were seen to fly up to her mast-head. The Ranger filled her maintopsail and stood away for her consort, and both vessels were speedily piled with canvas from deck to truck, steering for the passage between the Isle of Man and the Mull of Galloway.

Lady Flora suspected the cause of the signaling and hurried departure. She strained her eyes seaward, and caught sight of several white specks on the southern horizon, coming up from the Irish Sea.

At this moment one of the servants exclaimed :

"Lord save us, my leddy! If they havena' brocht back the siller plate thae robbers took yestermorn, and there's a bit letter tied to it, my leddy."

Lady Flora looked round, and beheld a bundle on the beach, with a note on the top, in the handwriting of the American leader.

She opened it, and read :

"MADAM :—I grieve to say that the men of the Ranger have inflicted a disgrace on their commander, which has cut me to the quick. In their anger and confusion at the death of Mr. Wallingford in your house, they so far forgot themselves as to plunder the abbey of the accompanying silver plate, which I beg leave to return with my most sincere regrets. If at any time my memory is attacked by Englishmen on account of the action of my men, I hope that you, madam, will do me the justice to tell the whole truth of the matter.

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"JOHN PAUL JONES,

"LADY FLORA BURTON.

Captain and commodore, U. S. N."

Here old John interposed a question.

"And whaur's Captain Burton, my leddy?"

"Buried in yonder sea," she answered, solemnly; "and I am a widow, John."

Old John stared aghast; and Lady Flora turned her gaze seaward.

Six vessels were lifting fast from the water, between Whitehaven and the Isle of Man; and the two corvettes were standing straight toward them, running free before a aint north-east wind.

CHAPTER XXII.

A LONG CHASE.

ON board the Ranger Commodore John Paul Jones was slowly pacing the quarter-deck, his eye alternately glancing from the sails of his own vessel to those of his consort, the Drake; and thence again to the southern seaboard, where six sails could now be counted, every one of which, through the telescope, resolved itself into a ship or brig, close-hauled, coming straight toward the corvettes.

The rover was in no doubt concerning the character of these vessels. From the moment the Drake had signaled him, he knew what he had to expect. The news of his descent on Whitehaven had flown along the coast of England, as fast as galloping relays of post-horses could take it, and a swarm of cruisers was doubtless cramming on all sail to reach Solway Firth, the scene of his late audacious exploits.

The wind being north-east, the two corvettes had a straight course, going free, toward the Mull of Galloway, but being off St. Mary's at the time when the English ships were signaled, to the east of Wigton Bay, it soon became evident that the latter must come very close, if not actually able to intercept them, before rounding the last cape of Scotland.

Under these circumstances, the American commander seemed to be as cool as a cucumber, and stood boldly on, every moment bringing the strangers and the moment of decision nearer. That the strange sail were all English men-of-war, of various sizes, became evident, as their hulls lifted in plain sight.

There were two, a frigate and a brig, at least two miles ahead of the rest, then came two ships, large frigates, to all appearance, while the largest of all was at least four miles astern of the brig, and showed two rows of ports under the telescope.

The odds were overwhelming if the enemy ever closed, and it became a question whether the two corvettes could scrape past without getting a broadside, as it was.

Mr. Lunt, first lieutenant of the Ranger, was prize-master in charge of the Drake, and the heavy draft necessary to manage the latter left both vessels very short-handed.

Mr. Vernon, the sole surviving officer of the Drake, above the middies, was on the quarter-deck of the Ranger, near her commander, being on parole.

"I fancy you'll find it hard work to get through the North Channel safe, commodore," he said, smiling. "They've sent the Light Squadron after you, I see."

Paul Jones smiled. He never looked better tempered than when in danger.

"The Light Squadron is made of your best sailers, I suppose, Mr. Vernon?"

"Ay, ay, sir. The frigate there is the Peerless. She's the quickest ship of her class in the navy, and carries forty twelves all told."

"The brig seems to be the quickest of the lot," observed Jones, thoughtfully. "See, she's passing the Peerless."

"So she ought," said Vernon, dryly. "That's the prince's yacht, the Arrow."

"The what?" echoed Jones. "The Prince of Wales? Why, he's a baby."

"I know it," said the English officer, smiling. "For all that, his gracious majesty is so determined to make a sailor of him, that he had the Arrow built in France, on purpose for him, when he's old enough. She's a flyer. You know these deuced Frenchmen build the quickest vessels in the world, and we take 'em."

"Ay, and we return the compliment," said the commodore, quietly. "How many guns has your Arrow?"

"Twelve nines," was the reply. "But she won't be fool enough to leave the Peerless."

"I don't know that," said the rover, as he pointed to the beautiful brig mentioned.

The Arrow was within a mile of the Ranger, half a mile ahead of the Peerless; and the two consorts were nearly south of the Mull of Galloway. Ten minutes more on the same course, and the North Channel would be opened to them. Then it was that the Arrow was seen to signal to the Peerless to receive a reply from the latter, and instantly to spread a cloud of studding-sails aloft and aloft, under which she skimmed ahead at such a rate that it became evident the Ranger was nowhere in the race.

Paul Jones knit his brows thoughtfully.

"So, so," he muttered. "You'll try that game, will you? Let us see who'll win in it, Mr. Bull. Tell the drummer to beat to quarters, Barney."

In a moment the deep roll of the drum called the men to their quarters, and the commodore hailed the Drake, which was sailing in company about a cable length to windward. The sea was very nearly smooth, the wind light and dying away momentarily, and voices could be distinctly heard at some distance.

"Mr. Lunt," said his chief, "yonder brig is commanded by a brave man. He knows that his squadron can not catch us, so he is going to throw himself in our way, and try to cripple us by shooting away spars. Go to quarters, sir, and see to it that he *doesn't pass your battery*."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the cheerful response; and the roll of the drum in the Drake announced that all was ready there.

Meanwhile the easterly wind had fallen to the faintest breeze imaginable, and the qualities of the different vessels began to develop.

The Ranger began to creep ahead of the Drake under the same canvas, and the brig Arrow moved away from the Peerless so fast that it seemed as if the latter was at anchor. The smaller the ship, the greater did her advantage seem to be.

Presently the Arrow appeared skimming along on an easy bowline on the port bow of the Ranger, within long gun-shot, when, just as she reached the position of inevitable conflict, the rumble of distant thunder struck on the ears of all. Paul Jones looked keenly all round the horizon. The sky over-

head was perfectly blue, but on the south-east, above the distant coast of Ireland, a bank of black clouds was swiftly rising up and sweeping forward in the wind's eye.

"Come quickly, welcome squall," said the commodore of the *Ranger*, in a low tone of relief, "and I'll laugh at the whole British navy."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the *Arrow* was seen to back her maintopsail, send down all her light canvas, and lay to exactly in the track of the two corvettes, with her broadside trained on them.

"Your little friend has plenty of pluck, Mr. Vernon," said the rover, coolly. "I can't say as much for his discretion. Keep her full, there! What are you doing, quartermaster? Mind your helm and leave the ship to me."

The abashed helmsman settled to his work steadily, and both vessels moved through the water toward the intrepid brig at the rate of four knots an hour. The cloud in the south-west slowly rose higher and blacker, as they went, till, by the time they reached the *Arrow*, it covered half the sky, and the east wind had sunk to mere cat's-paws.

Then, at about two cables' lengths of distance, the *Arrow* suddenly opened her little broadside, which she poured into the spars and rigging of the *Ranger*, with a vim and spitefulness that proved the desperate resolution of her commander. Double-headed shot, grape and canister on top of each charge, with cartridges twice the usual strength, announced that the brig was putting forth all her powers of offense. The foretopsail of the *Ranger* was torn to ribbons, half of her shrouds cut, and the splinters flew in showers from masts and yards. Then the beautiful corvette, now well past the dreaded Mull of Galloway, suddenly yawed widely, and poured her own far more destructive broadside into the devoted brig.

The effect was sudden, immediate and terrible. A single blaze of fire swept from the *Ranger's* side, and the *Arrow* was reduced to a wreck.

"All hands aloft!" suddenly shouted the American leader, at this moment. "Clew down and clew up! Don't leave a rag on the ship, lads!"

In an instant the torn rigging was black with men, and the sails began to come in with breathless rapidity. The *Drake*,

which had forged up abeam of the *Arrow*, let fly a second broadside at the unhappy brig, which completed her wreck, and then followed the example of her consort in furling every thing. Then there was a rushing in the air, a whistling in the shrouds, and the thunderstorm struck both ships.

The effect of the squall was immediate. It changed the wind to very nearly due south, with a little westing, and laid the North Channel right under the lee of the consorts. As soon as the first gust was over, and the ships righted from their beam-ends, top-sails were spread, close reefed, and the two corvettes began to fly through the water to the north-west with the gale well abaft their port beams.

The *Ranger* and *Drake*, sailing in company, passed Malin Head in safety, and steered boldly out into the North Atlantic. How they shaped their course southward, and passing safely through many dangers, finally reached the harbor of Brest, is it not recorded in history? There let us leave them in triumph, at the end of the memorable cruise in which the naval supremacy of England was first rudely shocked by the bold commodore of '78, when he brought into port, victor and prize, the two corvettes.

The subsequent history of John Paul Jones is familiar to all. Crippled in means, and surrounded by jealousies at every turn, with a dull sailing old Indiaman, hastily converted into a frigate, for his flagship, and consorts who neglected or defied his orders, he yet managed to infuse more terror into the minds of English and Scotch alike during the following year, than all the fleets of France had been able to effect in three hundred years.

The fearful battle with the *Serapis*, and his boarding and capture of that vessel when his own was sinking beneath him, are well known facts. How he did it and what he did, and finally under what circumstances he won the hand of Lady Flora, who remained faithful to him through good and evil report, we may some day tell our readers. Suffice it to say here that the lady kept her faith through all trials, and finally became the bride of the first and bravest of American commodores, who well deserved the proud title he afterward bore of **THE SEA-KING.**

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